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COB
(Devonshire)
Bray



A DESCRIPTION
OF THE
PART OF DEVONSHIRE
BORDERING ON
THE TAMAR AND THE TAVY;

ITS
NATURAL HISTORY,
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, SUPERSTITIONS, SCENERY, ANTIQUITIES,
BIOGRAPHY OF EMINENT PERSONS,
&c. &c.

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS TO
ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQ.

BY MRS. BRAY,
AUTHOR OF 'TRAVELS IN NORMANDY,' 'FITZ OF FITZ-FORD,' 'THE
TALBA,' 'DE FOIX,' ETC.

" I own the power
Of local sympathy that o'er the fair
Throws more divine allurements, and o'er all
The great more grandeur, and my kindling muse,
Fired by the universal passion, pours
Haply a partial lay."

CARRINGTON'S *Dartmoor*.

IN THREE VOLUMES.—VOL. III.

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BY MAN
LION
ROSE

SUBJECTS

OF

VOLUME THE THIRD.

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LETTERS TO THE LAUREATE,

&c. &c.

LETTER XXXII.

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQ.

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Ficarage, Tavistock, February 5, 1833.

MY DEAR SIR,

THERE is a scene in this neighbourhood, situated about half a mile from Tavistock, that I always visit with the greatest interest, not only for the pleasing objects which are there found combined, but from the poetical associations with which they are connected. The scene I allude to is the *Walla Brook*, a little stream of unpretending character, that, over a rocky bed, comes murmuring down the gentle descent of some sloping grounds, and unites itself with the Tavy nearly opposite to Rowdon woods. The Walla was, till very lately, overhung by some vestiges of oak trees so old and decaying, that I never could look at them without fancying that in the days of Browne the poet he had often reclined under their picturesque branches on the margin of the stream; and there, perhaps, employed his imagination in composing the beautiful episode he introduced in his 'Britannia's Pastorals,' called the 'Loves of the Walla and the Tavy.' But the old oaks are now gone; somebody has cut them down, most probably for fire-wood, since as timber they could be of no value; and there now lies the stream, stripped of its overhanging branches, and looks melancholy, and seems to murmur for the loss of its old neighbours.

I conclude the person, whoever he might be, who committed this act of spoliation had never heard of the poet, else he could never thus have laid low the sylvan patriarchs so long the tenants of his favourite brook. The scene, too, is spoiled for the pencil, for the venerable appearance of these trees contrasted finely with the playful, the light and

animated character of the river. Before, however, saying anything more about the Walla Brook I shall pause to speak of the poet, who has given to it an interest which no other rivulet, so humble in itself, can claim. Such is the power of poetry; it raises into notice the most neglected things, and often places the wreath of honour on the most lowly head.

There are very few materials for a life of William Browne, and those few were principally collected (most likely from tradition) by Prince, who wrote the 'Worthies of Devon' more than a century ago. That Browne died during the civil wars is very probable; and if we consider how much the public mind was occupied with the eventful scenes in which every man then bore a part, we can scarcely wonder that a poet, who never lent his pen to the popular feeling, passed out of life little noticed; that his memory was not considered sufficiently important to demand any record of his actions; and that his poems, which cherished and taught the peaceful enjoyments of life and the tranquil beauties of the country, should have sunk into neglect, when the only books published or read, with any chance of success, were such as fostered the worst passions, anarchy and rebellion; or the perpetual disputations of sectaries, and the foulest libels on the Church and the King. Men of worth, when they have neither power nor opportunity to stir actively in evil times, to support a good but falling cause, are generally found in the obscurity of private life, suffering in mind, in fortune, or in both; and when they die less regret is shown for their loss, since, in a time of intense public excitement, the feelings are too much engrossed by the fate of a

kingdom to turn with their wonted kindness on the interests of individual benevolence and sympathy. Indeed rebellion and revolution seem to harden the heart, as well as to stir the fiercer passions; how else can we account for the ferocious and almost unnatural crimes accompanying civil war?

That Browne, therefore, who certainly lived in these times (as we learn by his own pen, and by poems addressed to him by his friends), and died long before the Restoration, should have left scarcely any other memorial than what his own genius has secured for him in his works, and that little should be known about him, can excite no wonder. The prominent characters of his day were the eminent in crime or in suffering. His name belongs not to the former class of these, nor have we any authority for saying he was numbered with the latter: it is, therefore, only as a poet that enough of him is known to be judged by posterity with anything like certainty; though it speaks well for his character as a man that many of the eminent and virtuous of his time were found amongst his associates and friends. Of this more hereafter.

William Browne, a poet contemporary with Shakespeare and Spenser, was born in the town of Tavistock about the year 1590. He was the son of a private gentleman, whose family were of ancient standing in the county of Devon,—Prince says, most likely of the “knightly family of Browne, of Brownes-Illarsh near Great Torrington.” The uncle of our poet was no doubt a brave man, and in all probability followed the sea, as he was that favourite friend of Sir Francis Drake called Brute Browne, who was killed by the side of the great Admiral in

his own ship off Porto Rico, and whose death Drake so emphatically declared he would not unbend his spirit by lamenting it till he had requited the Spaniards for the deed. The family of Browne, in the male line, became extinct before Prince gathered the few remaining records concerning him; and the estates which had so long been theirs in this county, the worthy chronicler tells us, fell, therefore, "among distaffs,"—a mode of phraseology he often uses to express the weaker sex,—though some of the records of Devon would show that, in moments of trial where honour and loyalty were at stake, the distaffs were not in less worthy hands than the swords.

Thomas Browne, the father, finding William much addicted to books, very wisely determined to give him a liberal education. He was therefore sent to Oxford, and as his learning is spoken of prior to his removal to the university, it is not unlikely he had received the elements of classical knowledge at the grammar school at Tavistock; and that the first effusions of his infant muse were offered to the Tavy, the river he celebrates with so much fondness, and on whose banks, he more than once tells us in his poems, he first drew breath. That Browne should have attached himself to pastoral poetry was probably the result of early associations, since most feeling minds retain a lasting regard for their early local impressions, unless they are born in a populous city where man, more than natural scenery, engages the attention of their opening years. But it was the good fortune of Browne that he was born in the vicinity of a beautiful country; in a town venerable for its history and antiquity, and en-

riched with the then existing remains of monastic times. Near the regions, too, of the vast and fearful in the forest of Dartmoor, and the beautiful and the wild in the rocks and woods of Morwel; what subjects must these have been to the infant genius of a poet!—where every ramble of his boyhood presented objects such as were passed with indifference by the common eye, but to a mind like his could not fail to afford a full field for observation, reflection, and inquiry. That such was the case, and that he made himself familiarly acquainted with the feathered denizens of his native woods; the flowers and plants that grew on the margin of his beloved stream; and the trees that chequered it with light or shade as their branches waved above, we learn from his own poems; his lively descriptions every where bear witness to it; and the pastoral character of many of his most excellent productions show that his favourite theme was his best.

Subjects of this nature have so repeatedly been chosen for poetry, that critics sometimes object to their frequent recurrence; but surely this is an objection more nice than wise. The study of creation is inexhaustible; and, when treated by the feeling mind, never wearies. So impressive are all the works of the Divine hand; so greatly do the circumstances of nature vary, whilst their general character is the same; that the eye of a poet, as he looks abroad throughout the changing seasons of the year, in the fruitfulness of summer showers, or in the dreariness of winter days, continually finds some object, however familiar, present itself to him in a new aspect; there is something before unobserved, or unfelt: hence a fresh interest arises; a

new train of ideas spring up, and he receives those vivid impressions which render his compositions as original as they are pleasing; for all he does is in strict imitation of nature; like a skilful painter who, feeling every grace of the beautiful object that lies before his view, transfers it with ease upon the canvass, to which he gives an artificial life. Browne, Prince tells us, was removed to Oxford about the beginning of the reign of James I.: he could not then have been more than fifteen or sixteen years old; and as he made a rapid progress in his studies, his diligence must have kept pace with his opportunities and talents. At Oxford he cultivated his fondness for the muses; and on removing to the Inner Temple, to pursue the study of the law, he did not neglect that which was, in all probability, more congenial to his inclinations; as we find that, at the early age of twenty-three, he produced the first part of his celebrated work, 'Britannia's Pastorals.'

In his days reviews, friendly or adverse, were unknown: new works were not handed into the world, like our Devonshire ores, in the mass, stamped by royal authority to secure their reception. But though reviews were yet unknown, panegyrics, which preceded them, were not; and one author of established name gave a friendly introduction to an aspirant in the world of letters, by addressing him in a copy of verses, or an adulatory sonnet, that was prefixed to his book as a sanction of its merits. Browne's folio was not wanting in these; and it is honourable both to him and to his friends that it should have been so, since it is a clear proof he had not to encounter the heart-depressing feelings of coldness or neglect: his claim to poetical genius was

admitted, fostered, and rewarded by that highest of all rewards, the commendation of the wise and the good. Nor can we think other than well of the private character of the poet who, at so early a period, had won the friendship of Selden, of Drayton, of his fellow-townsmen, the great and good Sir John Glanville, of George Withers, and of many others whose praise alone was fame. Amongst the wits, too, who eulogized Browne was numbered Ben Jonson. In the year following the publication of this folio, encouraged no doubt by the favourable reception he had found with the learned and the tasteful of his day, he produced the 'Shepherd's Pipe,' in seven eclogues; a work that by some writers has been considered the model after which Milton wrote his 'Lycidas.'

His next publication was the second part of 'Britannia's Pastorals,' a work that established his reputation, and increased the number of his literary and noble friends. With what success he studied the law does not appear, as he is never spoken of by his contemporaries in the character of a lawyer; and by his attention having been so much directed to the poetical works he sent abroad, it is most likely he did not follow his profession with much zeal, and therefore with little success. Certain it is that neither law nor poetry were very profitable to him in a worldly sense, as his fortune was far from ample; and he finally abandoned the Inner Temple and returned to Exeter College, Oxford, as tutor to Robert Dormer, the young Earl of Carnarvon; a nobleman whose name is enrolled among the most gallant and amiable of the cavaliers who fell in the cause of their injured king.

Whilst engaged in directing the studies of his

pupil, Browne took his degree as Master of Arts in a way which did him honour. Nor can we doubt that he performed his duties as tutor in other than the most praiseworthy manner; and fostered all those high and generous principles of loyalty and courage in his pupil which none can better understand than a poetical mind regulated by a love of truth, and of that religion from whose source it springs, and supplies all the branches of knowledge which cultivate or form the moral character as healthful streams do the earth, and bring forth its richest fruits. How long Browne remained as tutor to this young nobleman is not known, nor is there any mention of his having accompanied him on his travels abroad—a thing, however, not impossible.

Clarendon gives a most lively sketch of Lord Carnarvon's character. He speaks of his education having been adorned and finished by travel in the countries of Spain, France, and Italy; and that he had subsequently spent some time in Turkey and the East. On his return home, Clarendon tells us that the young earl followed with considerable zeal the field sports of hawking and hunting, the favourite exercises of the quality and gentry. But the troubles commenced; the king's standard was set up in opposition to fanaticism and rebellion, and the bravest and noblest in the land hastened to its support. The Earl of Carnarvon was amongst these; he had a short but glorious career: in one fatal battle Charles lost friends such as no after time could replace, for Sunderland, Falkland, and Carnarvon fell in Newberry fight! Well, indeed, might Clarendon exclaim, that "on that day king and kingdom both were lost!"

It was after Browne had quitted the Earl of Carnarvon, that he found a gracious patron and friend in William Earl of Pembroke; a loyalist to whose character the immortal historian of the great rebellion pays the most ample tribute. He speaks of Pembroke as a nobleman of such severely just feelings, that he would contract a private friendship with no man unless his public principles were like his own. He describes him also as the generous patron of men of learning and talent. Under such auspices the fortunes of our poet improved; he became an inmate in the earl's family, and gained sufficient by whatever employment had been appointed him to purchase an estate. Where it was situated is not known; but who can doubt it was in his native county of Devon, for which he expresses so strong an attachment in all his works? It does not appear that he was ever married. Wood says of his person, that he had a little body, but with it a great mind. Prince tells us that it was not known when or where he died; "for I presume," says that biographer, "he was a different person from him of the same name who died at Ottery St. Mary, in the county of Devon, in the year of our Lord 1645." It is to the honour of Browne's memory that he was a royalist. This circumstance in his character is placed beyond all doubt, not merely by his friendship with the Earl of Pembroke, who would have no friends but such as felt as he did, but by Drayton having addressed to him a poem, now printed with his works, on the 'Evil Times,' in which he appeals to Browne as a friend who deplors them equally with himself.

The few particulars here related are all that have

come down to us respecting William Browne, our Tavistock poet; it now remains to mention successively his works. Besides his 'Britannia's Pastorals,' and the 'Shepherd's Pipe,' he wrote (though it was never published till the year 1772) 'a masque for the gentlemen of the Inner Temple.' On the death of Prince Henry, he produced an elegy, which possesses many conceits but no pathos. He wrote also some minor pieces; amongst them a humorous poem, in which he alludes to the old saying of 'Lydford Law.' This he composed after a visit to Lydford Castle; an ancient fortress, situated about seven miles from Tavistock. An imperfect copy of this was first printed in Prince's 'Worthies of Devon.' Respecting this poem, Mr. Chapple (the editor of Risdon) says—"I happen to be furnished with a true copy of the original very manuscript, by the transcriber, late Mr. Hals', of Cornwall, own hand; wherein are *three whole stanzas* which that of Mr. Prince has not.—Mr. Hals acquaints us also with the occasion of its having first been written. 'Mr. William Browne,' says he, 'A.D. 1644, coming to Lydford Castle to visit his friend Lieut. Col. James Hals (son of Sir Nicholas Hals, late of Fentongellan, Cornwall, Kt.), then and there a prisoner of war of the parliament party, under the custody of Sir Richard Grenville, Kt., King Charles the First's General in the West; and the said Mr. Browne (and his companions) having had a full view of this town and Castle of Lydford, soon after his return to Tavistock, sent Mr. Hals, under his own MS. those now (viz., by Mr. Prince) printed verses, with the MS. additions of verses 9, 10, 11, of which Mr. Prince absolutely wanted knowledge.'"

I have been induced to give the above long and quaint extract, because it serves to prove that the old saying of *Lydford Law*, to express an arbitrary procedure in judgment, was known in Browne's days; and could not therefore, as it is commonly said, have had its origin at the time Judge Jeffries held his sittings in the courts of Lydford Castle, for Browne's poem absolutely begins with the following allusion:—

“ I oft' have heard of *Lydford law*,
How in the morn they hang and draw,
And sit in judgment after;
At first I wondered at it much,
But since I find the matter such
As it deserves no laughter.”

Convinced by reading this that Judge Jeffries could have had nothing to do with our old saying, I determined to try if I could not trace out in the history of this part of the West some circumstance, that was at least likely to give rise to it; and I think I have succeeded. However, you shall judge if I am right or wrong in my conjectures.

Browne, be it borne in mind, wrote these verses after his visit to his friend Col. Hals, then *Sir Richard Grenville's prisoner of war*, in Lydford Castle; and of Sir Richard's conduct whilst governor of that castle, we have a very formidable picture drawn by the pen of Clarendon. The commissioners of Devon applied to the prince (afterwards Charles II.) petitioning that he would regulate “the exorbitant power of Sir Richard Grenville, who raised what money he pleased, and committed what persons he pleased.” The commissioners for Cornwall likewise “presented a very sharp complaint against him, for the strange acts of tyranny

exercised by him.”—“That he had” (amongst other arbitrary deeds) “committed very many honest substantial men, and all the constables of the east part of the county, to *Lydford prison*” (it was in the Castle) “in Devonshire, for no offence, but to compel them to ransom themselves for money.” In another instance he hanged “one Brabant, an attorney-at-law” (he was employed by Grenville’s wife in conducting a suit against her husband for ill treatment), “and afterwards, before the council, said he did it because the man was a spy.” He was also charged with a vexatious practice of calling out the Posse Comitatus on a sudden, merely to avail himself of the fine and imprisonment of defaulters. One of the constables he hanged up *without trial*; and then stated he had executed the man for negligence in his duty. Putting together these acts, I think we need look no farther than the time of Sir Richard Grenville’s government in Lydford Castle, to find a very likely origin for the saying of Lydford Law referred to in the poem of Browne. Thus, then, Judge Jeffries—whose ghost, according to a tradition of this place, still visits the old court-room at Lydford, in the shape of a black pig—stands acquitted on this charge; having assuredly quite enough to answer for, without any additional matter.

You mentioned to me in a letter, and Mr. Bray had also drawn my attention to the same thing, that some years since Sir Egerton Brydges had printed at the Priory press, and published a volume of Browne’s original poems, that had never before been given to the world. This volume is now, I believe, very scarce; I have never had the good fortune to see it, nor can I obtain a copy of it. It

was spoken of by some writer in the 'Gentleman's Magazine' a few years ago, as containing many poems, principally lyric, equal, if not superior to the 'Britannia's Pastorals.'

Mr. Beloe, the author of the 'Anecdotes of Literature,' possessed a curious copy in manuscript, of a collection of complimentary poems addressed to William Browne, by his brethren of Exeter College, Oxford. These, in addition to being curious as compositions of that day, serve to show the high degree of estimation and regard in which the poet was held by his most intimate associates,—an undoubted evidence of his worth. Amongst the friends who so eulogised him, we find Edward Hall, who appears to have been one of the sons of the learned bishop of that name. His verses are far beyond the general run of complimentary poems; they possess some elegance, and a happy turn of thought and expression, that evince the writer himself must have been no indifferent poet. Beloe's collection was, excepting Sir E. Brydges', I believe, the last publication of any original matter connected with Browne.

With a true poet, the world of Nature will ever be his chief delight: with him nothing is viewed in vain; and all he acquires by study and observation, he devotes to the highest purposes. Whatever is glorious in the heavens, he sees with reference to God; and his contemplations become essentially religious: these inspire him with all noble thoughts; a generous contempt for riches; for all selfish ends are inconsistent with the fervour of his enthusiasm, and the solemn aspirations of his mind. His genius soars on a seraph's wing; and whatever is grand,

whatever is fearful, the beautiful and the wild are to him as familiar friends. Solitude with him is "sweet society;" and the view of Nature in her serenest hour conveys to him lessons of virtue and of peace. Every image he traces, every idea that presents itself to his imagination becomes as a treasure, whence he selects those varied illustrations which add force to moral truth, and clothe religion in a robe of purity and grace. The theatre of rising hills, the fountain of "many waters," "the gush" of song as the light of day plays on mountain, path, and wood, the bursting vegetation, and every opening bud bathed in dew, to him are objects of holy joy; and he learns from them that wisdom which delivers the soul from the thralldom of worldly cares, and fears and passions; whilst his affections become fixed on Him in whom there is neither change nor shadow of turning; the God of all creation is his father; heaven is his home, and eternity the measure of his hopes.

Such is a true poet; and such were the sacred poets of Jerusalem, ere they were led away captive to sing "the Lord's song in a strange land." Even in these latter times we have had some gifted with this sacred spirit of poesy, whose lamps have burnt bright before the altar. But we have also had others who have made the music of harmonious verse a snare to the ear, and a deeper snare to the soul, in the pollutions they have conveyed to it by beguiling the senses. But their verses deserve not the honoured name of poetry, since they do not contain its essence—truth; the form may be there, yet the spirit is wanting; for the muse will not rest on polluted ground.

To return from this digression. It is not my intention to attempt any minute criticism of the works of William Browne; a far more competent hand than mine is required for the task. The writings of our poet, though soon after his death they fell into neglect, were once again brought into notice by Mr. Davis the bookseller, in 1772. Posterity has awarded to Browne those honours which are sometimes by envy combining with untoward circumstances denied to the living, but seldom to the dead when they are truly deserved. Some few remarks I shall alone venture to offer, since an acquaintance with the local scenes from which he drew many of his lively pictures enable an admirer of his poetry more fully to appreciate the merit of his descriptions, and the delicacy of his colouring in its most varied shades. However much Browne may have been praised for the fertility of his invention, and the strength of his numbers, it seems to me that his chief excellence lies in the picturesque manner in which he imitated nature. His birds, his flowers, and his rural scenery have all the vivid fidelity of truth. Indeed, he tells us himself at the beginning of his first book, that he intended to copy after nature, as she was seen surrounding the place of his birth:

“My muse for lofty pitches shall not rome,
But homely pipen of my native home.”

With rural scenery he had also studied rural character, and whenever he touches on the feelings that are chiefly called into play in a country life, it is evident he had seen and participated in those feelings he describes. In the higher efforts of imagi-

nation he is far beneath Spenser, whose works he is considered to have studied with the diligence of a pupil in his school. This may be traced in his 'Shepherd's Pipe,' which though it possesses many beautiful passages, is not to be compared with the 'Shepherd's Calendar' of his master. There is nothing in it that approaches in excellence Spenser's inimitable fable of the bramble and the oak. Nor did Browne equal Drayton in those wild flights of fancy that make many poems of the latter (the 'Nymphidia' in particular) so attractive, that we grow familiar with the fairy ground over which he guides our willing feet. It has been said that Browne's 'Masque of Circe,' written for the gentlemen of the Inner Temple, gave to Milton the hint from which he borrowed his 'Masque of Comus;' but there seems little probability such was the case. The song of the syren in 'Circe' has been justly celebrated; and the poem possesses many striking passages; but as a whole it is greatly inferior to 'Comus' in graceful sentiment and elegant diction.

Browne's great fault, more or less seen in all his poems, was that he never knew where to stop; so that he often weakens an image, or renders tedious a description, by running it out to an unconscionable length. This, though a fault, is one often found where there is much vivacity of imagination, and copiousness of expression: the plants of a barren soil have no luxuriance that requires pruning to give greater strength to those branches that it would be desirable to cultivate with the utmost care. However Browne, as a poet, might excel in rural imagery, he was able to soar in the higher regions of his art, though he seldom ventured within their

confines: some few passages of this description in his 'Britannia's Pastorals' are such as our greatest epic poets would not have disowned, as of a spirit kindred with their own. His verse is peculiarly harmonious, and flows on with a smoothness that is seldom broken by any harsh turn or mean image and word; though these latter faults are not such as he is wholly free from; indeed they sometimes intrude in the midst of an elevated description, or noble figure, in his subject. Thus we find in the first song of the second book, he injures the solemnity with which he is conducting the approach of "all-drowsie night," in her car of jet from her secret caverns, by making the steeds of "iron grey" with which she is drawn send "moist drops" upon the earth, which they "*mainly sweat*." Here the expression is coarse, and the image disagreeable: it offends the reader in the midst of a very striking picture. We would also wish (a few lines farther on) that the poet in describing the rivulets had omitted the "*conduit-pipes*," and had rather called those rivulets by their simple and proper name, in their progress from the "many a crystall spring."

It is, however, but fair to surmise that these "*conduit-pipes*" were probably suggested to him by the upper and lower conduit in the main street of his native town; for though these might not be compared to the fountains of Rome, yet, in his day, and even till within a few years past, they were objects of peculiar attraction, and places of general resort with all the old and young women and children in the neighbourhood. There they gathered to fill their water-buckets; to chat or wash their clothes at these fountains. The groups of girls thus as-

sembled and employed might, in some degree, remind one of Nausicaa and her damsels, who, by the command of Pallas, washed the bridal robes of state in that limpid fountain where the virgins of Phæacia were wont to purify their vestments and pursue their sports, as their mantles lay outspread and drying on the grass around them. This is probably rather too fine a simile for the old Tavistock conduit and the pretty Devonians assembled around it washing their clothes; and as these ancient conduits no longer exist, I have never seen the picturesque groups they once afforded, though I am assured by Mr. Bray they were such as would have supplied the most admirable subjects for the pencil of an artist like Prout, whose fondness for washing figures is well known to all the admirers of his works.

Of all Browne's poems, that which is most likely to interest an inhabitant of Tavistock is the episode he introduces in the second book of 'Britannia's Pastorals,' the 'Loves of the Walla and the Tavy.' I may be wrong in the conjecture, but I cannot help fancying the idea of this episode was suggested to him by Ovid's Egeria transformed into a fountain. Walla, by her own prayer, like Egeria, is changed into a stream, and runs to meet her beloved Tavy. This episode is replete with the most beautiful imagery, and many of the scenes it describes with so much truth and feeling will be recognised by a lover of "sweet Ina's coombe," and "Walla's silver stream." Ere quitting the subject of Browne's works, I cannot help selecting a few of the many beautiful passages with which they abound, as the best comment upon the merit of our poet with

which I can conclude this long letter. How lively is the following description !

“ Looke as a lover with a ling’ring kisse,
About to part with the best halfe that’s his,
Faine would he stay but that he fears to doe it,
And curseth time for so fast hast’ning to it ;
Now takes his leave, and yet begins anew
To make lesse vows than are esteemed true,
Then sayes he must be gone, and then doth finde
Something he should have spoke that’s out of minde,
And whilst he stands to looke for’t in her eyes,
Their sad sweet glance so tyes his faculties,
To think from what he parts, that he is now
As farre from leaving her, or knowing how
As when he came ; begins his former straine,
To kisse, to vow, and take his leave againe,
Then turns, comes backe, sighes, parts, and yet doth goe,
Apt to retire, and loth to leave her soe.”

How animated is this picture of boys hunting the
“ squirrel !”

“ Then as a nimble squirrel from the wood,
Ranging the hedges for his filberd-food,
Sits partly on a bough his browne nuts cracking,
And from the shell the sweet white kernel taking,
Till (with their crookes and bags) a sort of boyes
(To share with him) come with so great a noyse
That he is fore’d to leave a nut nigh broke,
And for his life leape to a neighbour oake ;
Thence to a beech, thence to a row of ashes,
Whilst through the quagmires and red water plashes
The boyes run dabbling through thicke and thin,
One tears his hose, another breakes his shin ;
This, torn and tatter’d, hath with much adoe
Got by the bryers, and that hath lost his shoe :
This drops his band ; that headlong falls for haste ;
Another cryes behind for being last :
With stickes and stoues, and many a sounding halloo,
The little foole, with no small sport, they follow ;
Whilst he, from tree to tree, from spray to spray,
Gets to the wood and hides him in his dray ;

Such shift made riot ere he could get up,
And so, from bough to bough, he wonne the toppes ;
Though hind'rances, from ever coming there,
Were often thrust upon him by despaire."

A stag in chase is thus introduced with great beauty :—

" More he had spoke, but that a bugle shrill
Run through the valley from the higher hill ;
And as they turn'd them towards the hart'ning sound,
A gallant stag, as if he scorn'd the ground,
Came running with the winde, and bore his head
As he had been the king of forests bred !
Not swifter comes the messenger of heaven,
Nor winged vessel with a full gale driven,
Nor the swift swallow flying neere the ground."

The industry of the house-marten, a common bird here, is thus prettily described :—

" So soone as can a marten from our towne
Fly to the river underneath the downe,
And backe returne with mortar in her bill
Some little cranny in her nest to fill."

The following is a most lively description of a concert of birds :

" Two nights thus past : the lily-handed Morne
Saw Phœbus stealing dewe from Ceres' corne.
The mounting larke (daie's herauld) got on wing,
Bidding each bird choose out his bow and sing.
The lofty treble sung the little wren ;
Robin the meane, that best of all loves men ;
The nightingale the tenor, and the thrush
The counter-tenor sweetly in a bush :
And that the music might be full in parts,
Birds from the groves flew with right willing hearts :
But (as it seem'd) they thought (as do the swaines,
Which tune their pipes on sack'd Hibernia's plaines)
There should some droaning part be, therefore will'd
Some bird to flie into a neighb'ring field,
In embassie unto the king of bees,

To aide his partners on the flowers and trees,
 Who condescending gladly flew along
 To heare the base to his well-tuned song.
 The crow was willing they should be beholden
 For his deep voice, but being hoarse with scolding,
 He thus lends aide : upon an oake doth climbe,
 And, nodding with his head, so keepeth time."

The Devonshire legend, that fairies and pixies steal honey from the hives of bees, is thus noticed by Browne :—

" For as I oft have heard the wood-nimphs say,
 The dancing fairies when they left to play,
 Then backe did pull them, and in holes of trees
 Stole the sweet honey from the painfull bees,
 Which in the flower to put they oft were seene,
 And for a banquet brought it to their queene."

Many an inhabitant of Tavistock will recognise the following scenes :—

" A little grove is seated on the marge
 Of Tavy's streame, not over thicke nor large,
 Where every morn a quire of Silvans sung,
 And leaves to chatt'ring windes serv'd as a tongue,
 By whom the water runs in many a ring,
 As if it fain would stay to heare them sing,
 And on the top a thousand young birds flye
 To be instructed in their harmony.
 Neere to the end of this all-joyous grove
 A dainty circled plot seem'd as it strove
 To keepe all bryers and bushes from invading
 Her pleasing compasse by their needlesse shading,
 Since it was not so large but that the store
 Of trees around could shade her best and more.
 In midst thereof a little swelling hill,
 Gently disburthen'd of a christall rill,
 Which from the green side of the flowry bancke
 Eat downe a channell—there the wood-nimphs drank."

Here are the lines alluding to Ina's Coombe, now more commonly called Inscoombe, situated about a mile and a half from Tavistock :—

" There lyes a vale extended to the north
 Of Tavy's streame, which prodigall, sends forth
 In autumnne more rare fruits than have been spent
 In any greater plot of fruitful Kent.
 Two high brow'd rocks on eyther side begin,
 As with an arch to close the valley in.
 Upon their rugged fronts short writthen oakes
 Untouch'd of any feller's banefull stroakes,
 The ivy, twisting round their barks, hath fed
 Past time wylde goates which no man followed;
 Low in the valley some small herds of deere,
 For head and footmanship withouten peer.
 Fed undisturbed; the swains tha: thereby thrived,
 By the tradition from their sires derived,
 Call'd it sweet *Ina's-coombe*: but whether she
 Were of the earth or greater progeny
 Judge by her deeds; once this is truely knowne,
 She many a time hath on a bugle blowne,
 And through the dale pursu'd the jolly chase,
 As she had bid the winged windes abase."

Another scene in our neighbourhood is thus beautifully described:—

" Betweene two hills, the highest Phœbus sees
 Gallantly crown'd with large skie-kissing trees,
 Under whose shade the humble valleys lay
 And wilde-bores from their dens their gamboles play,*
 There lay a gravel'd walke oregrowne with greene,
 Where neither tract of man nor beast was seene;
 And as the plow-man when the land he tills,
 Throws up the fruitfull earth in ridged hills,
 Betweene whose chevron form he leaves a balke;
 So 'twixt those hills had nature fram'd this walke,
 Not over darke, nor light, in angles bending,
 And like the gliding of a snake descending:
 All husht and silent as the mid of night:
 No chatt'ring pie, nor crow appear'd in sight;
 But further in I heard the turtle-dove
 Singing sad dirges on her lifeless love;
 Birds that compassion from the rocks could bring
 Had only license in that place to sing:

* The "*wilde-bores*" as well as the "*nightingales*" of Browne, in *Deronsshire*, I apprehend must have been poetical licenses.

Whose doleful notes the melancholy cat
 Close in a hollow tree sat wond'ring at.
 And trees that on the hill side comely grew,
 When any little blast of Æol blew
 Did nod their curled heads, as they would be
 The judges to approve their melody."

The poet thus describes himself, when about to relate his tale of 'Walla, Tavy's fairest love:—

"Among the rest a shepherd (though but young,
 Yet hart'ned to his pipe) with all the skill
 His few yeeres could, began to fit his quill,
 By Tavy's speedy streame he fed his flocke,
 Where when he sate to sport him on a rocke,
 The water nymphs would often come unto him,
 And for a dance with many gay gifts woo him.
 Now posies of this flowre, and then of that;
 Now with fine shels, then with a rushy hat,
 With corall or red stones brought from the deepe
 To make him bracelets, or to marke his sheepe.
 Willie he hight. Who by the ocean's queene
 More cheer'd to sing than such young lads had beene,
 Tooke his best-framed pipe and thus gan move
 His voice of Walla, Tavy's fairest love."

The progress of the whole episode reminds the reader of Ovid. After the nymph Walla is transformed into a stream, the poem thus concludes:—

"To Tavy's christall streame her waters goe
 As if some secret power ordayned so;
 And as a maide she loved him, so a brooke
 To his imbracements onely her betooke.
 On Walla's brooke her sisters now bewayle
 For whom the rocks spend tears when others fail,
 And all the woods ring with their piteous moanes:
 Which Tavy hearing, as he chid the stones,
 That stopt his speedy course, raising his head
 Inquired the cause, and thus was answered:
 'Walla is now no more. Nor from the hill
 Will she more pluck for thee the daffadill,
 Nor make sweet anadems, to gird thy brow:
 Yet in the grove she ruus, a river now.

Looke as the feeling plant, which learned swaines
Relate to grow on the East Indian plaines,
Shrinkes up his dainty leaves, if any sand
You throw thereon, or touch it with your hand:
So with the chance the heavy wood-nymphs told,
The river, inly touch'd, began to fold
His arms across, and, while the torrent raves,
Shrunke his grave head beneath his silver waves.
Since when he never on his bankes appeares
But as one franticke: when the clouds spend teares,
He thinks they of his woes compassion take,
(And not a spring but weeps for Walla's sake;)
And then he often (to bemoane her lacke)
Like to a mourner goes, his waters blacke,
And every brooke attending in his way,
For that time meets him in the like array."

LETTER XXXIII.

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQ.

CONTENTS.—Period of the great rebellion—Commencement of the reign of Charles I.—Prosperous state of England—The amiable character of the king—Discontents—Factions—Arts practised by the leaders of rebellion—The Marquess of Hertford; Sir Ralph Hopton, &c., sent into the west—Various fortunes experienced by the royalists—Stratton Heights—State of Devon at this period—Sir Ralph Hopton at Launceston Castle—Tavistock a very disaffected place—Pym its member—Lewknor the Vicar—Sir Bevil Grenville, his gallantry and spirit—Sir Nicholas Slanning, governor of Pendennis Castle—Names and quality of gentlemen who rose in arms for the king—Muster-roll of Slanning—Earl of Stamford retires to Tavistock after Ruthen's defeat at Saltash—The royalists march to meet him at Tavistock—Stamford departs the town—The royalists in distress from the want of supplies—Terms of treaty entered upon whilst at Tavistock—The republicans not to be relied upon in their promises and protestations—Victory of Stratton Heights—Sir Ralph Hopton—Battle of Lansdown—Sir Bevil Grenville killed—Sir Nicholas Slanning killed—Prince Charles (afterwards Charles II.) comes to Tavistock, 1645—Appoints certain lords to meet him there—Receives letters from the king—The prince and his councillors deliberate—Answer returned to the king—Arrival of the Cornish trained bands—The lords again deliberate—The prince resolves to march to Totness—A detachment of the royalists surprised by the enemy who beat up their quarters—The retreat from Tavistock to Launceston left to the conduct of Sir Richard Grenville—His careless manner of performing that duty—In 1644, the house at Fitz-ford held out against the rebels—Taken by Lord Essex—One hundred and fifty persons in Fitz-ford made prisoners—Character of Lady Howard—An account of her life—Her numerous marriages—Her beauty, talents, and wealth—Buckingham procures her for the wife of Sir Richard Grenville—Sir Richard's character—His ill-treatment of his wife—His licentiousness and extravagance—Suit in chancery concerning her property—Disastrous consequences to the husband—

Walredon another mansion and domain of Lady Howard—Sir Richard escapes his long imprisonment—Goes beyond sea—Decree of the Star Chamber—Sir Richard returns—Becomes a royalist, his wife takes part with the republicans—He settles in her house near Tavistock—Buckland Monachorum given to him also by the king—Sir Richard's abuse of prosperity and power—He waylays, catches, and hangs the attorney employed by his wife against him—Time of Lady Howard's death uncertain—Legend of Lady Howard and the goblin hound—Romantic and traditionary tale of Lady Howard and her daughter—Her will—Tradition respecting Charles II.'s flight to Tavistock—Old buildings considered the scene of Charles's concealment, pulled down—Said to have originally belonged to Orgar, Earl of Devon—The architecture of later date—Remarkable traditionary tale of the spirit and courage of a girl when the town of Tavistock was in the hands of the rebels—Singular letter from a mad woman—Painted glass and tombs destroyed—A very curious poem written by a school-master, called 'Tavistock's Encomium'; given at full length.

Vicarage, Tavistock, April 13th, 1833.

MY DEAR SIR,

THE next remarkable period of which I have to speak in the history of our town, is that of the great rebellion; when it will be found this place was, more than once, a busy scene of action, of negotiation, of contest, and of all those varied movements of hope and fear that influenced the adherents of either party during so perilous a time.

That in the commencement of the reign of Charles I. abuses existed, that the prerogative of the crown was not sufficiently defined, and that in some instances an arbitrary power was exercised by the king, are truths not denied even by the warmest advocates of loyalty. But what were these grievances in comparison with the many blessings then enjoyed by the country at large? And is it not cruel and most unjust to condemn Charles for such

few arbitrary deeds, without taking into consideration the acts of his predecessors, and the almost more than mortal rule that was then held sacred and unalienable in princes? The acts of Henry VIII., of Mary, of Elizabeth, and even of James I., the way in which they commanded parliaments and tutored councils, were too often in the highest degree an exercise of the most arbitrary will; and could it be expected that Charles, educated in a court where the divine right of kings was never disputed,—where, from his cradle, he was taught that absolute obedience was due to the crown,—should at once forget the lessons and examples held up to him for years? Yet, as an attentive examination into all his acts will prove, he was far less arbitrary than his predecessors. Clarendon declares that he was doubtful of his own judgment, where that judgment was often the soundest and the best; and too much led, from this very want of confidence in himself, by the opinions of those around him. He had not, indeed, at all times about him a Falkland and a Hyde for his bosom counsellors and friends.

Yet if we consider the state of England, as the great historian of those days has depicted, at the commencement of Charles's reign, we shall wonder by what infatuation, if the chastising hand of God was not in it, a country could be led on to the scenes of outrage then committed, and to the murder of so amiable and virtuous a prince! The kingdom was at peace, and commerce so flourished, that Perin-chief tells us, even in return for the Spanish gold, then coined at an English mint, the merchants exported their own goods, mostly of native commodities. Husbandry was thriving, the land increasing

in value and cultivation. Over the wide seas the English name and character was respected. The laws were administered with care; and even the courts against which the greatest objections were raised, seldom punished other than notorious offenders. The arts of painting, sculpture, and architecture were cherished and encouraged by a king of the most refined taste; they were indeed rising to a degree of perfection, that had his life and throne been spared, would have made this kingdom rival in her schools those of foreign countries in their proudest days. Above all, the Church was graced by men of such eminence, piety, and learning, that the works of many of the prelates and divines of that day will exist as long as the language in which they are written endures. Yet these blessings were strangely overlooked by a thankless and indulged people; they thought most of what they still wanted, and undervalued what they had; for nothing could satisfy the wilful and discontented: to give happiness to such was useless. Like the calmest and most crystalline spring, if it pours forth its waters into the sea, they will become distasteful, and turbulent amidst angry waves; even so God's choicest blessings poured on a thankless people lose all there is in them of blessing, and presently change their nature; for every thing must be ill, where there is no disposition to think it well. The reign of Charles was, indeed, disastrous; that long train of prosperity had corrupted the nation, even as prosperity sometimes corrupts individuals in their fortunes. In his day there was the insolence of wealth, and a growing self-opinion founded on error, the certain forerunner of a sullen impa-

tience of authority : a love of change came with these opinions ; and the vulgar, who are ever eager after novelty, and think the newest thing the wisest and the best, were fed with the hopes of a wild and fanatical liberty ; were entertained with scoffs and libels against the Church, the King, and the Nobility. And who is there that has looked on human life and need be taught that ignorance and vulgarity delight in the censure of great persons, and give a ready credence to the worst that can be spoken of all who are above them in station, conduct, or education ? A demagogue who will entertain a mob with declaiming against these (especially if they are of an order which is invested with reverence from its religious character) will ever be popular with the multitude. Rapidity, too, was another principle exerted as essential in the times of rebellion : a leader of faction did not pause ; for there was nothing he feared so much as the calmness attending the leisure of reflection—when reason speaks more than passion.

Thus did the designing, the violent, and the disaffected, in Charles's days, eagerly unite with all who would but help the work of mischief. The hopes of the spoliation of the Church were a sufficient spur to raise the outcry against bishops ; and the mob, who love action when pillage is likely to follow, were ready enough to assemble on the least sign from their leaders. No one was thought so inconsiderable but that his services were welcomed at such a time ; for though to support the honour of a kingdom, to defend its institutions and preserve its sanity, requires courage, constancy, and sense, the meanest and vilest of their kind are fully competent to the work of

destruction, whilst men who are the most cowardly in situations where their actions are seen, as it were singly by all, so that they fall within cognizance of the laws, become bold and even brutal in a rabble, where, however great the injury may be that is effected, the blame is general more than particular.

Had the redress of real grievances been the only motive that stirred on the patriots, as they are called, of Charles's time, they would soon have been satisfied, for grievances were complained of and redressed; but every concession, as do all concessions made from fear, produced a yet higher, less reasonable, and more insulting demand. And when terms were proposed to the king, as in the negotiations at Carisbrook, during his captivity, his enemies first proposed something within the possibility of his consent; but no sooner did they find he was likely to grant it, than something else was added, repugnant to his feelings and his conscience, to which they knew he could not consent; and thence they took occasion to represent him as faithless, and not to be relied on in any terms proposed! Thus was his honour defamed, his principles impugned, and that reverence for his person which his virtues, as well as his station, so justly entitled him to command, was no longer entertained for him: it was but one of those sure modes to overturn the throne, by rendering him who fills it an object of contempt and distrust in the minds of men.

Yet, says a writer of the time, who was not too favourable to the royal prerogative, "many who took part against the king, thought they did it to defend him from dangerous counsellors; to maintain the privileges of parliament; to guard the protestant

faith from the insidious attacks of popery, and to preserve the ancient laws of the land." Such were the false pretences that led away the weak rather than the wicked. Others required pretexts less reasonable than these; and with such the desire of seeing a government that was to be a perfect one (in such measure of perfection as no mortal state ever yet attained, and can alone be found in heaven) was made the motive and spur for disaffection. These were evils enough, but not all. If it is fatal, as surely it is, to any state to have no established Church, it is scarcely less dangerous to have a country overrun with sectaries. This cause of misery, in the mixed disputes of civil and religious government, was, in the reign of Charles, the ever-burning torch that kept alive the fires of sedition and rebellion. When the popular faction, which judged all things by their own excited feelings, and nothing by truth, whose voice was drowned in the noise of numbers, had shaken or overthrown all the ancient institutions, all the ties of obedience and honour in Church and State, the Monarchy, hitherto upheld by them, fell like a noble cedar of the forest, whose lofty head was alone to be brought low by the whirlwind or the axe.

Such was the end of that general system of change and reformation which produced the civil wars in the times of Charles I.; a fearful example that it is dangerous to commence any system of reformation contrary to the known laws and ordinances of God—contrary to the wisdom and practice of ages. When the zealots and patriots of Charles's days stepped beyond the boundary of duty; when they ceased to honour the king; when

they forgot the written word, which forbids resistance to God's vicegerent here on earth, they were no longer patriots but rebels; then was it the pride of the heart, and not the love of freedom, which became the motive and the measure of their actions. They advocated the liberty of the subject, and became slaves to the tyranny of an armed force. Their House of Commons rose up against law, and submitted to those who made their own will a law. They aided in the murder of a king, and were driven from their seats by a dictator. They commenced their career by tampering with things that should have been held inviolate: they would taste the sweets of liberty (a wild liberty of their own choosing), but like the honey of Jonathan (in those scriptures they affected to follow to the letter) too many found death in the flavour, for the poison remained when the sweetness was no more found.

Good, it is true, at length arose out of evil; but that was God's doing, not theirs. They made the havoc of the tempest: He alone sent the calm which succeeded it, in the restoration of the Throne and the Church.

At the time that Charles, finding it necessary to strengthen his power in the several parts of England where he could hope to make a stand against the Parliament, sent into the west the Marquess of Hertford with many nobles devotedly attached to his cause; he sent there, likewise, Sir Ralph Hopton, Sir John Berkeley, and Sir Hugh Pollard; the latter gentleman being a native of Devon, and possessing considerable influence amongst all classes in the county. Many others of the best families in the shire, the most respected, and having large

estates emulously followed their example, and spared neither their property nor their lives in the service of the king. Various were the fortunes experienced by these brave men. They were sometimes raised to the highest hopes of ultimate success, as in the battle of Stratton Heights, and at others, as in the yielding of Exeter and Plymouth, they were reduced to the most melancholy prospects of the future. Yet, unsubdued in spirit, many were the plans, some recorded in history, others but the theme of tradition, concerted, even in the most hopeless extremities, to raise the men of the West in the cause of the king. So sharp were the contests in this county, that there is scarcely an old house belonging to a family of any consequence, during the period of rebellion, but it underwent a regular siege—was taken and retaken (like Ford House and Sydenham, and Great Fulford), battered and injured, with all the circumstances attending wars so bitter in their nature, where one townsman, or one friend, frequently found himself placed in opposition to another, without the kindly feelings of private intercourse having been previously broken.

Clarendon remarks that in Devon, “though there was a wonderful and superstitious reverence towards the name of a parliament, and a prejudice to the power of the court, yet was there a full submission and love of the established government of Church and State, especially to that part of the Church as concerned the liturgy, or book of common prayer, which was a most general object of veneration with the people.” So much, indeed, did this love of the liturgy prevail, that during those times when the ascendancy

of the parliament was greatest in the West, service was in many of the family mansions regularly observed by some secreted minister of the Church, who performed it often at the hazard of his liberty and his life. Walker, in his very curious book on the sequestered clergy, furnishes so many well-authenticated histories of the persecution and zeal of these good and learned men in our county, that a very interesting little volume on the subject might be collected from him and Prince.

It was about the time that Sir Ralph Hopton arrived at Launceston in Cornwall, when an order of the sessions was granted to the high sheriff, a gentleman loyal to the king, to raise the posse comitatus for the purpose of dispersing the unlawful assembly of committee men (Sir Alexander Carew and Sir Richard Buller being at their head) at Launceston, under whose authority Sir George Chudleigh, a gentleman of talents, courage, and fortune, was most actively employed at Tavistock, with five or six troops of horse, to raise men on the parliament side. Sir George intended to advance farther westward, but he paused on learning news of the hostile preparations being made by Sir Ralph Hopton, previous to the battle of Stratton Heights; Chudleigh, therefore, thought it prudent not to stir farther than necessary from his present quarters, and he merely drew off a part of his force to Lifton.

Tavistock, I fear, notwithstanding the brave manner in which the old house at Fitz-ford held out for the king, was a very disaffected place. Nor can we wonder at this, when we recollect that it was under the immediate influence of the Earl of Bedford, who

had taken part with the rebel parliament; that the notorious and artful Pym was its member, and that Stroude and his crew of evil spirits, making their haunt at Newnham, only a few miles from the town of Plymouth, kept up a constant intercourse with this neighbourhood, even whilst they were engaged in their duties elsewhere. There was likewise in Tavistock a certain Mr. Thomas Lewknor, then vicar of the town, and though of him I have been able to learn no particulars, yet as he was noted by the parliament committee in their report as "a preaching minister," and suffered to remain quiet in his cure, we may rest satisfied that he was more a prudent than a zealous servant of the Church, and did not harangue his flock on the sin of rebellion to the king. Lewknor enjoyed, according to the same report, a very good living; in proportion to the times much better than it is now, since it is there valued at two hundred and forty pounds per annum, and a glebe yearly valued at seven pounds; the whole making a large income in those days for a country clergyman, though in so populous a town.* No glebe now goes with the church.

After raising the posse comitatus of the West for the king, the loyal gentlemen next determined on raising voluntary regiments of foot among themselves, their followers, tenantry, and friends. Sir Bevil Grenville, that truly chivalrous leader in generosity, gallantry, and courage; and the noble and accomplished Sir Nicholas Slanning (son of the Slanning who was

* Eleven pounds per annum was, in the days of Henry VIII., the pension charged for the vicar, on the Russell family, by the original grant of the abbey lands.

killed in the duel by Sir John Fitz) exerted themselves resolutely and unremittingly in the royal cause. Sir Nicholas was at this time governor of Pendennis Castle, and a member of the House of Commons.* So likewise were John Arundel and Trevannion, both gentlemen of the greatest worth. These also undertook to raise a troop of horse, volunteers, for the king. Tremaine, Trelawny,

* The muster-roll of Sir Nicholas Slanning is still in existence. In fact it is at this time in our house. My brother copied it, and inserted it, in his notices of Tavistock Abbey, in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. The following are curious items:—"Stannary of Tavistocke—A perfect muster-roll, containing the several hundreds, parishes, and hamlets, together with the officers and souldiers within the said stannary. Officers, Sir Nicholas Slanning, Lieutenant-Colonel; Joseph Drake, Esq., Captain-Lieutenant; John Jacob, Gent., Ensign." Names of four sergeants and eight corporals; then follow the names of the men from the different hundreds, making in all a force of 156, of which about two-thirds bear muskets, and the rest pikes. "Seen and confirmed by us under our hands and seales—(the first name effaced) Nicholas Slanning, Edw. Yarde, Joseph Drake."—At the back of the roll are the following notes respecting the arms of the company. They are very curious.

"Horse defensive armes, are a backe, brest, and pot, pistol prooffe; offensive, a sword and case of pistells, ther barrel not under 14 inches in length; horse furniture, a great saddle or pad with burrs and straps to affix the holster."

"Footman's armes: musquett barrell not under three foot; the gage of the bore for twelve bullets (new) but ye old way fourteen to ye pound; a collar of bandaliers; with a sworde."

"Pykeman's armes: a pyke of ashe not under 16 foote, head and foote included, with a backe, brest, head-piece, and sworde, ye old pyke fifteen (feet); musquetier, halfe pound poudder, and 3 yardes of matche, half a pound of bulletts."

"Horse, a q^r. a pound poudder and soe of bullets; 5s. for every day's omission" (of attendance). Clarendon tells us all the ammunition was supplied by Sir Nicholas Slanning from the store at Pendennis Castle; and that whilst at Tavistock he was distressed by the small supply that remained. The above scanty list shows the correctness of the historian.

Edgecumbe, and many other men of fortune and merit, hastened to show their zeal in the same cause at this eventful time; and Sir Richard Grenville (younger brother of Sir Bevil) was soon after sent into the West bearing the king's commission, which, notwithstanding some good services he rendered, was by him grievously disgraced and abused.

Not long after the gentlemen of the West had thus associated themselves in support of the royal standard, Sir Ralph Hopton obtained a victory (A. D. 1641) over the Parliament forces at Bradock Down, near Liskeard, in Cornwall, where Ruthen had led the rebels on. In this engagement the royalists were singularly fortunate; since, without the loss of one gentleman of any note, and very few men, they made twelve hundred of the enemy prisoners, seized their colours, ammunition, cannon, and stores, and set Ruthen flying, who speedily took shelter in Saltash, with a view to fortifying it against further assaults from his pursuers. The Earl of Stamford, hearing of his ill success, retired, in great disorder, into Tavistock, where he hoped to act as a check on the growing successes of the royal party.

The royalists no sooner heard of Stamford having taken his station in our town, than they determined to rout him out, and secure the place for the king. Sir Bevil Grenville, Sir Nicholas Slanning, Colonel Trevannion, and others, advanced, therefore, with all their forces, towards Tavistock. But the Earl not liking their visit, and probably thinking so many guests were more than he could entertain in a manner that would be satisfactory to the Parliament, fled before their arrival, and took refuge in Plymouth. The royalists, disappointed in their expected en-

counter with Stamford, dispersed their companies in various quarters, and actively employed themselves wherever they could fall in with an enemy; at the same time they succeeded in harassing Chudleigh, and prevented his raising any effectual body, so as to render him formidable in this part of Devon.

Wearied with their labours, and finding, from want of sufficient ammunition, that it was impossible they could stir the rebels in the strongholds of their retreat, they once more retired to Tavistock, where they refreshed their men, arranged their affairs, and laid plans for future action. Notwithstanding these ardent exertions, and their generously throwing their own means into the common stock, the want of supplies, especially of ammunition, grievously troubled them. Indeed, the successful manner in which they had hitherto kept the enemy at bay, and, in many instances, had routed him, was surprising; since all their warlike stores had amounted to nothing more than those furnished by Sir Nicholas Slanning from Pendennis Castle, and what they had fortunately taken in action.

So formidable an obstacle was this want of supplies to all their measures, that, whilst at Tavistock, they were induced to listen to certain proposals made by the rebel gentlemen of Cornwall, "that a treaty," says Clarendon, "might be entered into, whereby the peace of the two counties of Cornwall and Devon might be settled, and the war removed into other parts." Though such a treaty was not welcome to the royalists, yet, crippled in their means, without ammunition, and urged on by the popular cry around them for peace, they went so far as to consent to a truce, for the purpose of taking into consideration the terms of the treaty. The debates

were preceded by every one receiving the sacrament, with a most solemn oath made by either party, that it was for no individual interest, but for the general peace and welfare of the West, to maintain the Protestant faith established by law in the Church of England, and the just rights and prerogative of the King, with the privileges of Parliament, &c.; that he who took the oath there acted without any equivocation, mental reservation, or evasion whatsoever. The royalists, judging the sincerity of their enemies by their own, in this matter, and not supposing it to be possible that they could cherish any motives of guile, after having so solemnly disavowed them, were induced to retire into Cornwall to consider further on the treaty. But they speedily found that no reliance was to be placed in the amicable terms proposed by their enemies; and soon after meeting with Captain Carteret, formerly the controller of the king's navy, who undertook to procure for them as much ammunition as they could desire to possess, in consequence of these circumstances the treaty commenced at Tavistock was never carried into effect. And so ready had the opposite party held themselves for hostilities, that on the very day after the cessation of preliminaries, Chudleigh marched on the town of Launceston, and took it whilst the inhabitants thought themselves secure, and were not provided for such a visit, in consequence of the late truce, and the hopes of its final adjustment. The royalists, however, were not long in retaliating; since, under the command of Sir Ralph Hopton, they speedily achieved that great victory at Stratton Heights, where the Earl of Stamford and Chudleigh were completely routed.

The battle of Lansdown, near Bath, soon after

followed; there the great and good Sir Bevil Grenville lost his life. Sir Nicholas Slanning was also in this action, and displayed an intrepidity that resembled the heroic spirit of a chivalrous age. He is recorded on that day * to have performed actions nothing less wonderful than daring: he led on his followers in the mouth of cannon and musketry, whilst the balls were flying around him in all directions, towards the thickest of the fight. In this perilous position he remained unhurt, so that he seemed to carry with him "a charmed life," and in the eyes of his devoted men appeared almost more than mortal; he had, indeed, raised in them a spirit of enthusiasm which resembled his own; and the names of Grenville and Slanning struck terror into the hearts of the enemy. His next action was his last. He accompanied Prince Rupert to the assault made on Bristol, a short time after Lansdown fight; and, to the dismay of the whole army, fell before the walls of that city, on the 26th of July, 1643. His friends, Godolphin and Trevannion, perished in the same encounter. Slanning was one of the four gentlemen, all of Cornwall or Devon in their birth, who were called the four wheels of Charles's wain. Our county biographer, Prince, mentions a monody, composed at the time, on the death of these heroes, of which he gives two lines,—

"The four wheels of Charles's wain,
Grenville, Godolphin, Trevannion, Slanning, slain."

Certainly such men deserved to be celebrated in better verse. The royalist and poet, the unfortunate Shirley, would have done justice to their memory,

* See Clarendon, Prince, and Fuller.

had he made their fall the subject of elegiac verse, as he afterwards did the fall of the king, in those immortal lines that would stir the coldest bosom with feelings of sympathy and pity*.

The visit of Prince Charles to our town, still the theme of tradition, is likewise recorded in history. It occurred in 1645, whilst the Parliament forces so closely invested the city of Exeter (on the east side by their works, and on the west by their men), that no relief could be conveyed to the citizens, who were in danger of suffering even from famine during the siege. The prince, seeing the peril in which his father's affairs stood in the West at such a crisis, determined on calling a meeting, for the purpose of consultation, at Tavistock, and thither he summoned to attend in council all the noblemen and gentlemen within reach, in whom he could repose any confidence in a business of such import. Some jealousies, however, on the part of Lord Wentworth, and the spirit of intrigue so natural to Sir Richard Grenville, unfortunately interfered with the schemes of Charles at the moment, and his council was little more than one in name, in consequence of the non-attendance of the principal persons who were expected. The prince, finding his presence would be absolutely necessary to compose discontents, remove jealousies, and bring things into better order, determined to advance into Devon with as many men as he could collect to reinforce

* The beautiful monody by Shirley, written after the death of Charles I., was introduced into one of his plays. It begins,—

“The glories of our mortal state
Are shadows, not substantial things, &c.”

Lord Wentworth's party, so that Wentworth might no longer have cause to complain his men were not strong enough to bring the enemy to battle.

The day after Christmas day, in the year 1645, Prince Charles quitted Truro, passed through Bodmin, and on the following morning entered Tavistock, where he found waiting for him the few persons who had obeyed his summons for the council. These were Brentford, Capel, Hopton, and Colepepper; and lastly came Sir Richard Grenville. Sir Richard sent on his three regiments of foot to Okehampton, under the command of General Molesworth, and the Cornish men were expected to come up in a body in less than a week. At this time the blockade of Plymouth was maintained by General Digby; so that a strong party of royalists, on every side, were assembled, or assembling, to forward those plans on which Charles and his friends should determine to proceed. There was, however, a cause of anxiety that could not at this moment be so easily set at rest—the want of sufficient supplies for such a body of men.

Scarcely had the prince reposed a few hours on his arrival at Tavistock, when he received a letter from the king (which is given at large by Clarendon), containing a command that, had he obeyed it, would at once have changed the whole aspect of the sovereign's affairs in the West. Charles informed his son that he was at Oxford, and had just dispatched a trumpet to London to demand a pass for his messengers, as he had resolved to propose a personal treaty with the rebels of that city. He believed they would be induced to entertain his proposals; and if so, his real security would rest in the

prince, his eldest son, being in another country ; a circumstance which would make the rebels hearken and yield to reason. The king, therefore, proceeded to command the prince to take the earliest opportunity of transporting himself into Denmark, France, or Holland, observing all security as to his passage, since nothing else was to be feared.

This epistle was written in the Lord Colepepper's ciphers: he was obliged, therefore, to be trusted with the letter, in order to decipher it ; and though at first the contents were held very secret, yet it was deemed better to lay them before the council, ere an answer was sent off to the king.

The lords, after fully considering the matter, deemed the prince's absence from the army in the West (to say nothing of the difficulty and hazard of getting him on ship-board) would be so discouraging, and produce such ill consequences at such a time, that the royal command could not be obeyed without doing a manifest injury to him who gave it. The Tavistock councillors therefore drew up a letter, to which each person signed his name, pointed out the dangers attending the plan for flight, &c. and dispatched it by the Oxford courier with all haste ; yet fearing miscarriage, on the next day another messenger, bearing a copy of the same letter, was sent forward by another road, that the king might not be held in ignorance of their opinions, and the true state of his affairs in the West.

Shortly after this subject had been discussed, the Cornish trained bands arrived in Tavistock ; they were above two thousand in number, and had marched up, many being taken from the mines, in good health and spirits, and willing to match their

enemies on the first summons to the field. The arrival of these men cheered the hopes of the royal party, and they were received with every welcome.

Again the council of Tavistock resumed their deliberations; when it was strongly urged by the majority, that the prince should forthwith lead the Cornish trained bands and his own guard (then stationed near the town) to Totness, where a magazine should be formed of all necessary provisions, and certain money and stores, collected in Cornwall, be forwarded by sea, and conveyed thence to this new treasury against a time of need, after relieving the present wants of the royalists. Totness, too, was considered a convenient town whence the prince might join his adherents at Exeter; and should the rebel army endeavour to intercept him, the distressed garrison of the city could then quit their stronghold, in which they had been literally held prisoners, and relieve themselves at such a juncture. The prince might retreat or engage, as his interests and the position of his affairs should render it most advisable. These deliberations, and the intelligence forwarded from various parts of the country to the councillors, occupied some days, and were not hastily dismissed. We have a tradition here, likely enough to be true, that it rained so incessantly all the time the prince was in our town, that he expressed his impatience at such abominable weather, and the recollection of it never forsook him; as, after his restoration to the throne, it was his custom to say, did any one observe the fineness of the weather—"Yes, the day is fair enough; but depend upon it it must be raining at Tavistock."

The council having determined on their measures,

a numerous force was about to march forward to Totness, when the news came that the enemy had advanced, and beaten up Lord Wentworth's quarters in two several places. Soon after this, Wentworth himself appeared, in great agitation, not knowing the circumstances of his loss in either quarter, for the accounts he had received were certainly exaggerated, though the truth was bad enough when fully ascertained. The prince proposed marching, with all his force, immediately to Totness; but those about him feared that it must have already fallen into the hands of the enemy; and that after the late disasters, he could not hope to rally his horse in any strength, till such of the troops as had been engaged in the late contests should have had two or three days' rest. In consequence of the disorderly retreat of the horse soldiery, it was also found absolutely necessary to draw off the blockade from Plymouth; so that Tavistock would no longer be a place of safety for Prince Charles. He was advised to hasten on to Launceston in Cornwall, and for his further security, to leave the horse in charge of the Devon side of the river. From Cornwall it was proposed he should advance to the relief of Exeter; that city still remaining besieged and in great distress, being in want of even the necessaries of life.

The conduct of the retreat to Launceston, and bringing the supplies of food from Tavistock, was intrusted to Sir Richard Grenville, who performed that duty in so careless and heedless a manner, that, "besides the disorders he suffered in Tavistock by the soldiers," says Clarendon, "a great part of the magazine of victuals, and three or four hundred pair of shoes were there left and so lost." And so

ill did Sir Richard conduct himself after this neglect of duty, that the Prince was obliged to commit him to prison in Launceston Castle. In a short time he was removed to the custody of the keeper of the mount in Cornwall, where he was held in durance, till the parliament forces gaining possession of that county, Charles gave him leave to go beyond seas, that he might not fall into the hands of his enemies; Sir Richard Grenville's licentious and violent courses having not less than his loyalty rendered him abhorrent to the godly, whilst his reckless, intriguing and tyrannical disposition had done the most irreparable injuries to the king's cause during the time he acted as general in the west.

During the rebellion in the year 1644, the house of Fitz-ford, in Tavistock, (then belonging to Sir Richard Grenville by his marriage with Lady Howard,) held out for the king. It was taken by Lord Essex, who seized, besides arms, stores and two pieces of cannon, one hundred and fifty persons within the house, whom he made prisoners. It does not appear Sir Richard was himself of the number. Lady Howard (I cannot help calling her by the name by which she is so universally known in this place) was the wife of four husbands. One more would have rendered her a fit rival for Chaucer's wife of Bath; but if all, or only half the stories told of her are true, she must have been a sort of female Blue Beard, not less formidable in her disposition than commanding in her person and her manners. She was born in Tavistock, nor will her fame be speedily forgotten; all the hobgoblin tales of later times are more or less connected with this remarkable woman, whom they represent as cruel, unfeeling, and wicked. I here purpose giving such

account of her life, as I have been able to collect it from authentic materials or tradition.

I do not know in what year she was born, but as she was the daughter of that unhappy young man, Sir John Fitz, who, in the latter part of the reign of Elizabeth, killed the first Slanning of note, and soon after fell on his own sword, we are certain she must have been in existence previous to the reign of James I.; she was most probably an infant when her father died by his own hand: her mother was Gertrude, daughter of Sir William Courtenay, of Poderham Castle, Kt., early married to Sir John Fitz, and early left a widow with this one child, Mary, the heiress of immense wealth. Nature had been no less bountiful to this child than fortune; for she grew up remarkably handsome, was possessed of strong and masculine powers of mind, and had attained more than the ordinary accomplishments of her sex or her station. She had many suitors, and the first gentlemen of the West were anxious to win the beautiful and gifted heiress of Fitz-ford.

Her first husband was Sir Alan Percy, Kt., sixth son to Henry Earl of Northumberland; he did not long survive his marriage; and she next gave her hand to Thomas, son and heir of the powerful Thomas Lord Darcy, Earl of Rivers. On her again becoming a widow, her alliance was courted by the Earl of Suffolk, for his third son Sir Charles Howard, who won her, but soon died, and left her still in the pride of rank, fortune, and beauty, one of the stateliest dames that frequented the court of Henrietta Maria, where she cultivated the friendship of Buckingham; who, as we shall speedily find, exerted his influence with her so as to render her propitious to the addresses of one of his own dependents, Sir

Richard Grenville, whose fortunes he had undertaken to improve. The duke thought a rich wife no small advance towards the work, and thus did the heiress of Fitz give herself to her fourth, last, and worst husband. There is some mystery attached to the way in which she managed her own fortune in all these marriages; at one period, as we shall presently see, it afforded a rich harvest for lawyers in a regular chancery suit; when a third party stepped in between man and wife and claimed the bone of contest; yet his power could not have been absolute though he obtained an award; since her only child, a daughter, being dead, or supposed dead, before her, she bequeathed her estates (Walreddon and Fitz-ford amongst the rest) to her kinsman, the Hon. Sir William Courtenay, of Powderham Castle, Bart.; and though Fitz-ford was afterwards purchased by the Russell family, Walreddon is the property of a Courtenay to this day.

The most considerable notices that I have found respecting Lady Howard, occur in Clarendon; he does not mention her by name, but speaks of her, in the first instance, as the rich Devonshire widow who married Sir Richard Grenville; and lastly, he refers to the Suffolk family, with whom she was connected by her previous marriage with Sir Charles Howard. These are proofs sufficient that it must be our Lady Howard, and no other, who has been immortalized by the great historian. Clarendon says that Sir Richard Grenville contrived to insinuate himself into the favour of the famous Duke of Buckingham; and his credit every day increasing with his patron, the favourite, "out of the generosity of his nature, resolved to raise him in his fortunes:

towards the beginning whereof, by his countenance and solicitation, he prevailed with a rich widow to marry him, who had been a lady of extraordinary beauty, which she had not yet outlived, and though she had no great dower by her last husband, a younger brother of the Earl of Suffolk (Sir Charles Howard), yet she inherited a fair fortune of her own, near Plymouth; and was besides very rich in a personal estate, and was looked upon as the richest match of the West."

By the fair fortune of her own *near Plymouth*, Clarendon most likely means the house and estate of Walreddon; which, though distant but two miles from Tavistock, certainly is not so far from Plymouth, but that such an expression might be used to point out its situation in the neighbourhood of a large and well-known town. The historian thus continues:—

"This lady, by the duke's credit, Sir Richard Grenville, for he was now made a Knight and Baronet, obtained, and was thereby possessed of a plentiful estate upon the borders of his own county, where his own family had great credit and authority. The war being quickly at an end, and he deprived of his great patron, he had nothing now to depend upon but the fortune of his wife; which though ample enough to have supported the expense a person of his quality ought to have made, was not large enough to satisfy his vanity and ambition; nor so great as he, upon common reports, had promised himself by her. By not being enough pleased with her fortune, he grew less pleased with his wife; who being a woman of a haughty and imperious nature, and of a wit far superior to his, quickly resented

the disrespect she received from him; and in no degree studied to make herself easy to him. After some years spent together in these domestic, unsociable contestations, in which he possessed himself of all her estate, as the sole master of it, without allowing her out of her own any competency for herself, and indulging to himself all those licenses in her own house, which to women are most grievous, she found means to withdraw herself from him, and was with all kindness received into the family in which she had before married, and was always very much respected. Her absence was not ungrateful to him, till the tenants refused to pay him any more rent, and he found himself on a sudden deprived of her whole estate, which was all he had to live on: for it *now* appeared that she had, before her marriage with him, settled her entire fortune so absolutely upon the Earl of Suffolk, that the present right was in him, and he required the rents to be paid to him. This begat a suit in chancery between Sir Richard Grenville and the Earl of Suffolk, before the Lord Coventry, who found the conveyances in law to be so firm, that he could not only not relieve Sir Richard Grenville in equity, but that in justice he must decree the land to the earl, which he did. This very sensible mortification transported him so much, that being a man who used to speak bitterly of those he did not love, after all endeavours to engage the earl in a personal conflict, he revenged himself upon him in such opprobrious language as the government and justice of that time would not permit to pass unpunished; and the earl appealed for reparation to the court of the Star Chamber, where Sir Richard was decreed to pay three thousand pounds to the king, who gave the fine likewise to the earl: so that

Sir Richard was committed to the prison of the Fleet in execution for the whole six thousand pounds, which at that time was thought by all men to be a very severe and rigorous decree, and drew a general compassion towards the unhappy gentleman."

For some years Sir Richard endured this imprisonment, which made him the more bitter against his wife: he at length escaped his captivity and fled beyond seas. There he remained till the great changes in England having caused many decrees of the Star Chamber to be repealed, and the persons awarded to pay penalties absolved, he came home and petitioned to be heard in mitigation of his case. Before this came on, the rebellion broke out in Ireland, and Sir Richard Grenville was, on account of his military skill, sent thither as captain of a troop of horse. As what I have to say of him must be principally confined to circumstances connected with his quarrel with his wife, I shall not follow him in his career either in Ireland or England. When the civil wars distracted this country, and the Parliament became openly rebels, Sir Richard joined the royal cause, and was soon appointed to a considerable command in the West. His wife inclined to the Parliament, so that one of the first things granted to him by the king was the sequestration of her estates to his own uses. "Upon which title," says Clarendon, "he settled himself in her house near Tavistock, and took the stock, and compelled the tenants to pay him their rents." If the house in which Sir Richard now made his residence might be Walreddon or Fitz-ford, we are not told, but most probably the latter, as it was situated so very near the town. At one period, when the king's affairs prospered in the West, and the Earl of Essex's forces

were dissolved, so much was Grenville in favour with the royal party, that Charles granted him all the Earl of Bedford's estates (as well as Lady Howard's and those of the Drake family), by which the abbey lands of Tavistock, and of Buckland Monachorum became his; and during the blockade at Plymouth, he resided in the latter place, which had formerly been inhabited by the great Sir Francis Drake. But Sir Richard Grenville was not a man to possess prosperity with moderation; he speedily abused all these favours, and his conduct in a public as well as in a private capacity soon proved that power could not have been intrusted to worse hands than his own. Many of his acts were so notoriously disgraceful, tyrannical, and cruel, that they were at length formally brought as charges against him before the Council, where he was especially required to appear in person, and answer for his misdeeds whilst governor of Lidford Castle. One circumstance of his cruelty deserves here particular notice, as it shows the bitterness and malice with which he entertained any recollection of the past quarrels with his wife. During the time of her proceedings against him in Chancery, she had employed an attorney at law, whose name was Brabant; he bore the character of being an honest man, and loyal to the king. He lived somewhere in this part of Devonshire. Many years elapsed since the decision of that suit against him, before Sir Richard became a man of so much importance by his high military command in the West. No sooner did Brabant learn the news of his arrival, than, well knowing he was not of a disposition to forget or to forgive an old adversary, he judged it prudent to keep as much

as possible out of his way. Having occasion, however, to make a journey that would take him near Sir Richard's quarters, he disguised himself as well as he could, and put on a Montero cap. Sir Richard, who probably had been on the look-out to catch him, notwithstanding all these precautions, received intelligence of the movements of the man of law. He caused him to be intercepted on his road, made prisoner, and brought before him. In vain did Brabant protest that he was journeying on no errand but his own private affairs; for Sir Richard affecting, on account of his Montero cap, to believe him to be a spy, without a council of war, or any further inquiry, ordered the luckless lawyer to be hanged on the spot; and thus did he murder his wife's advocate, many years after he had committed the offence of managing her cause in the Chancery courts.

When Lady Howard (for she would now never be recognised by any other name in Tavistock) died I do not know, nor where she was buried; though I have heard a vague tradition that she ended her days in great mental agony, at some house she had near Oakhampton, where, also, according to a more common tradition, she now runs every night in the shape of a hound, to perform penance, according to the wild legend before noticed concerning her. There is a story, too, but I am not enough acquainted with its detail to repeat it, which says something about one of her husbands (I do not know which) being drowned, whilst riding in his coach on the day of his marriage, in the deep pool, still called Fice's or Fitz's Pool, in the river Tavy. This tale I believe to be quite as true as that of the goblin hound, the coach of bones, &c.

The particulars of a story I have now to relate about her, from the careful way in which they have been most minutely handed down from generation to generation, in some of the most respectable families in the neighbourhood, and from the bad fame and ill character of Lady Howard, I should be much tempted to consider are, if not wholly true, at least grounded on fact. I have been in the room, indeed once slept in it (though I saw no ghost), where the catastrophe of this story is said to have occurred, at Walreddon House.

Lady Howard had an only daughter, (I do not know by which marriage,) whose history was involved in considerable mystery. She is said to have taken some strange dislike to the child from the very hour of its birth, so that she could not endure the infant in her sight. A lady of some station, who was a visitant at Walreddon and Fitz-ford (for Lady Howard resided occasionally at each dwelling,) observing the cruel treatment the child received from her unnatural mother, felt so much compassion for her (as she really feared for the little girl's life if she continued where she was), that she caused her to be secretly conveyed from Walreddon to a distant part of the country, where, with every care, but in as private a manner as possible, she brought her up as if she had been her own child. Lady Howard felt not at all displeased at the idea of her daughter having been stolen; and if she had committed no other crime than the cruelty with which she treated her, she deserved her nightly ride in the coach of bones for that offence alone. If the lady who had carried off the infant, spread a false report of her death or not, tradition has not informed us; but it

positively affirms that years rolled on, and no intelligence being received concerning her, Lady Howard believed that the wish she had often been heard to express was accomplished, and that her daughter was really dead.

In the interval the child grew up a beautiful young woman, and so opposite to her hard-hearted mother in disposition, that she was universally beloved for her kind and affectionate manners. The friend who had stolen her began now to reflect what a fine young woman she was grown, what an ornament she would be to her family, and, as there was no other child, what a pity it would be if Lady Howard died without knowing she had such a promising daughter alive, or without being reconciled to her; as it was not to be supposed she would obstinately shut her eyes to the young lady's merits, and refuse to give up a prejudice so unreasonable as that she had conceived against her whilst yet a child. Nevertheless, she knew enough of Lady Howard's character to feel she must be warily dealt with in the matter; and, after long deliberation, she fancied the most likely way to succeed would be to contrive to introduce the mother to the daughter in a manner that would afford her an opportunity of becoming well acquainted with her merits, without the danger of a favourable impression being prevented by any preconceived prejudices.

She took the opportunity, therefore, of introducing the young lady to her mother as the orphan of a particular friend; and so much was Lady Howard delighted with her, that she became fond of her, and expressed a wish for her society. The friend who had brought about the meeting felt so rejoiced at

the happy prospect it had opened for her adopted child, that she judged it best to let the truth be known; and on Lady Howard passing some high encomium on the girl, she told her "that it was her long-lost daughter of whom she had spoken in such warm terms, and that she merited all her affection."

The words were scarcely spoken, when a look of horror overspread the countenance of the undeceived mother; her passions rose to a degree of frenzy, and with many dreadful threats, and considerable violence, she turned her own child, who implored her to show her but the slightest mark of parental feeling, from her doors. Time again rolled on, and Lady Howard, being advanced in life, her daughter was persuaded to make another attempt to soften her obdurate heart ere she died.

Lady Howard was at this time living in her house of Walreddon, and thither went her daughter. At the moment of the meeting, her mother was descending an upper flight of large, old, oak stairs, that led to the state apartment on the second floor; the daughter was ascending the hall stairs from below, which led in the same direction. Seeing her mother thus suddenly appear, she threw herself on her knees on the landing place, and caught hold of her dress, scarcely knowing what she did in such moments of agitation. Lady Howard rushed towards the state room, her daughter still holding her clothes with a firm grasp, and passionately imploring her to look on her with pity. At this instant they were under where the folding doors stood partly open; Lady Howard seized them, and with a force so

sudden closed them on her child that her arm was broken between the leaves of the door. The unnatural mother turned her from the house, and never saw her more.

What became of the poor girl is not known ; tradition is silent respecting her fate ; but it should seem as if Lady Howard had felt some touch of remorse on her account before she died ; for after bequeathing Walreddon and Fitz-ford to the Courtenay family, there was a certain portion of her property reserved with a clause, that she gave it to any person who could prove herself to be the daughter of Mary, sole heiress of the late Sir John Fitz, and widow of Sir Richard Grenville. The legacy so strangely bequeathed was never claimed.

We have a tradition here, silly enough in itself ; but, as it is current, I mention it. The story goes that when Prince Charles halted on his route into the West, after the battle of Worcester, certain diminutive equestrian figures, formed of pottery, were placed on the house-tops of every dwelling where he sought shelter, in order to denote speed, and give a signal which was well understood by his friends. Tradition likewise asserts that, after Worcester fight, he was, for a short space of time, in Tavistock, and left the town to seek a refuge in Hayne House, the seat of the Harris family, whence he attempted to make his way to the coast. There may be some truth in the last part of this story ; as, till within a few years, when Hayne House underwent alteration, I am informed, by my intelligent friend Mr. Hughes, that a very secret chamber, of small dimensions, built apparently within the walls, and en-

tered by a softly-sliding panel, used to be shown as the hiding-place of the young prince, afterwards Charles the Second, in his distressing flight.

At no very distant period, some ancient and extensive premises were pulled down in Tavistock, in order to clear the way for the butter-market. There was an inn attached to them, and near a very old, picturesque archway, which gave entrance to a building whose roof was decorated with the little equestrian figures before noticed, which the elders here would have it were placed up as signals after the battle of Worcester, and that, of course, in the house so signalized, the prince himself lodged. If he really did lodge there, and very possibly he might, I have no doubt it was during the time he underwent the rainy penance, with the Lords of his Council, in the year 1645, before he fled to Launceston, when Sir Richard Grenville left to the town that legacy of old shoes to remember the royal visit, recorded by Clarendon. In the house just named there was a very large apartment, beautifully panelled with carved oak, and a coat of arms of the time of Elizabeth, having the crown between the letters "E. R.," and beneath, the words "Vivat Regina."

These premises were, in parts, much older than the days of good Queen Bess; they formed, indeed, a wing to those antique buildings said to have been the residence of Orgar, Duke, or Heratoge, of Devon, and of Ordulph, his son. They corresponded with another wing, terminating with the archway at the bottom of Kilworthy Lane; but that archway is of the Tudor age, and certainly not older than the reign of Henry the Seventh; though this is a fact

which no architect could ever persuade the good people of Tavistock to believe. They will have it that it is of Saxon date. One of the learned of this place once argued the point with me, and I very simply said, "But the archway has the *label* moulding—an ornament which the slightest acquaintance with Gothic architecture will show you (and there are numerous examples of it in this neighbourhood) was common during the Tudor age, nor indeed is it found to exist before that period."

My opponent stared on hearing the words *label ornament*, and said he had often looked at the gate, and could not see anything like a *label* upon it. I soon found he had been looking for what he would certainly never find—viz., an ornament that should resemble, in form and flourish, a label attached to an apothecary's phial! Gothic architecture assuredly had many whims and freaks, but none, that I know of, like this.

One of the most curious traditional stories respecting the days of rebellion we received from a poor mad woman of this place, who, in consequence of being harmless, is suffered to go free; and as this story is also told by those who are in their right senses, I shall mention it, though the poor mazed woman has an undoubted privilege to claim it as her own tale, since it relates to one of her family in former days. The method she took to communicate it to Mr. Bray was not a little singular. She wrote him a letter, and dropped it in the post. This epistle, though it was wild and disordered in several parts, yet showed that she possessed some "method in her madness;" for whilst, among other things, she told him that several gentlemen had given her

half-a-crown a-piece, she very significantly added, "Go thou and do likewise." The story she told concerning her relative in the times of Charles the First, I had heard before from my husband's mother, the late Mrs. Bray, who was a great collector of old tales, of all ages and all kinds. Her version of the story enabled me to comprehend the poor woman's in the letter, which was somewhat confused. I now have that letter before me on my desk; it begins thus:—

"I, then Jenny C——s, but thirty-four years have been Jenny C——be, (meaning she was married thirty-four years ago,) was born in Crebar, in the parish of Tavistock. My mother's name was H——, and her great-grandfather's name was M——, the last that served South Sydenham four hundred years; and, on the other side of her ancestors, their name was S——, and he kept a wine-cellar at the King's Arms: it was his land in the time of the civil wars; and he had a daughter in a decline!" Jenny then proceeds to give, in this very curious epistle, the sum and substance of the tale concerning this "daughter in a decline;" but as her version really would require a running comment to make it understood, I beg leave to give the whole story in a more brief form.

The parliament forces, after they captured Fitzford House, made wild work in the town with whatever belonged to the royalist party, or had any connexion with the old-established order of things. To this troop of parliamentarians I have always attributed the injuries sustained by the monuments, &c. in our church. I consider them guilty of having rendered noseless Judge Glanville and his wife; of

having knocked out whatever might remain of the painted glass in the church-lights; and of doing the same in the vestry, where we know, by the churchwarden's accounts, there was a new painted window set up in the days of Richard the Second, and nothing was more offensive to the puritans than such decorations: they made war, indeed, on all saints (as they stood in Gothic brilliancy, whenever the sun shone out), and showed them no quarter. In a very old and rare book of the doings of that period, which is in Mr. Bray's library, I once read the deposition of one of the godly, made before the sitting committee of county sequestrators, wherein he triumphantly relates how that very many church windows did he, with his own single hand, demolish, in doing "*the Lord's work*;" and, amongst other feats, mentions his having smashed in a whole row of devils, represented, with "papist idolatry," as stirring up the souls in their fiery furnaces of purgatory below, the "prime devil of all having a long tail behind, most shameful to behold in any Christian place of worship." But to Jenny's story; for, something like her poor wits, I have been wandering.

The parliament troopers, knowing that the honest vintner who kept the wine-cellar at the *King's Arms* was a royalist, determined that his wine should never more be drawn to pledge royal healths; and thinking that the safest way to remove the temptation would be to get rid of the cause, they very soon resolved to wash that down their own throats, and that not a drop of ungodly wine should be left in mine host's cellars after that day. They commenced proceedings, however, by clearing the way above stairs; and "*the spoiling of the Egyptians*" having

become a standard item in the divinity of troopers, all were considered by them as such who had anything worth spoliation. Concerning this part of the story, my chief authority, Jenny's letter, says, "it was havoc-work in the parlour." No doubt it was, and in the kitchen, too; for mine host was famous for beef and black-puddings; which reminds an historian, so circumstantial as myself, of those lines of Butler,—

" And fat black-puddings, proper food
For warriors who delight in blood."

The daughter of the vintner was, poor thing, in a consumption; but being a girl of spirit, and her mind remaining in firmer condition than her body, she bethought herself, when she heard what was going on, whether or not her wasted and ghastly appearance might not be made of service at this crisis. So she resolutely snatched up, neither dagger nor poniard, though she was about to play the heroine, but—a white table-cloth; and as all spirits, real or otherwise, never walk but in white robes, the table-cloth made a magnificent mantle for a ghost of the very first order. Thus attired, she stole down stairs, and took her post in the dingy confines of an old wine-cellar, situated at the extremity of a long, narrow, formidable, and very-ominous-dark passage. (By the way, I am aware compound adjectives are now much in vogue in subjects connected with grandeur and sublimity; pray, therefore, admire, as you are a critic, the construction of the above sentence; you will not meet with such every day.) Now the vintner's daughter, though she was no ghost, looked very like one, and placing herself against the cellar door, she stood, "like patience on a monument,"

smiling at her own device to cheat the troopers. These she speedily heard making their way down the steps; she groaned a groan, and stood still. The corporal, who headed the marauding party, started at the sound, and his eye caught the pale, thin, white, and shadowy figure that, in a motionless attitude, stood with upraised and menacing hand before the door. "What the devil is that?" said one of the fellows. "Swear not at all," said the corporal, "for maybe yonder is the devil's dam, who may take offence at thy familiar oaths." "Devil or no devil," said the first speaker, "I will send a shot at the white mark." He raised his pistol, and took a steady aim at the vintner's daughter. She neither moved nor spoke, such was her resolution. "Do not fire," said the corporal, "the figure mocks thy attempts, do not strive with spirit, for yonder thing is neither flesh nor blood; let us be gone from this place, or something may happen." "Now I look again," said another trooper, "I see it is a ghost; the Lord have mercy upon us! I will sing a psalm;" and with that he began to shake, and quavered out a few tremulous notes of some most godly stave. At the hearing of this the ghost was moved, and making as if she would advance upon the whole party, she sent every mother's son of them flying with fright; up the steps they ran, much faster than they had descended. The cellar escaped rifling; the house was instantly abandoned; nor did they even stay to carry off the booty they had collected above stairs. These are the particulars of the story of Jenny's grandmother's great grandfather's daughter, in the days of Charles I. She adds, in her letter, that "the young woman, who showed such

resolution, died"—I suppose she means of the consumption that so well fitted her to perform the part of a ghost in the presence of the troopers.

The following curious piece in verse I insert here, because, though I know not the author's name, I have heard it is considered to be the composition of a schoolmaster of this town, who held that office towards the latter part of the reign of Charles II. If this is true or false, I cannot determine; but of the poet we may venture to say, whoever he might be, the same as Fuller said of Scaliger, that he is one who writes "as if he rather snorted than slept on Parnassus, for his verses sound better to the brain than to the ear." A very rare old printed copy of them, on a large sheet of paper, like a bill stuck against a wall, has been lent me by Mr. Crapp, of this town. Here is the copy. Our chronicler in rhyme calls this production of his muse

"A PANEGYRICK POEM;

OR,

TAVESTOCK'S ENCOMIUM."

Within this countie's bowels lies a moor,
Of old call'd Dart, down from whose mountains roar
Combining fountains, which without delay
Towardes the ocean do their streams display;
And (as if over-tired) make their graves
Betwixt the northern and the southern waves.
West, and beneath this dismall forest lies
A fruitful vale, in form triangle-wise,
Wherein stands TAVESTOCK, whose glorious state
Hath much been dark'ned by the checks of Fate.
But yet her Abbies and her mon'ments' story
Are strong assertors of her ancient glory;
Trading (the life of places) here's to pull
The finest locks of all the Cornish wool,
This into yarn, her people doth convert,
Which other tradesmen elsewhere impart,

To make those famous serges, which are hurled
 By ship from England through the boundless world :
 Yet not the meanest part of wool there brought,
 Is by herself into fine Kersies wrought,
 Whose noted goodness in the strength and wear
 Need not the passport of the Aulniger.
 Her suburbs or precincts six miles do stretch,
 Upon the east and westward four do reach,
 One mile towards the south she branches forth
 And claimeth two miles straight upon the north ;
 Abounds with tythings and fair villages,
 Woods, waters, pleasant groves and tillages ;
 Her grazing pasture, Carmel-like for feeding,
 Her mountain's top like Bashan hills for breeding.
 Her earth is fruitful, and her ground is free,
 To lend all sorts of grain to industry.
 So fam'd for leeks and onions in this isle,
 As if she suck'd her fat from Egypt's Nile,
 Her well-filled channels for the people's use
 Through every street their christal streams diffuse,
 Those (pallisadoed with revengeful power)
 The stony pavements do most neatly scour ;
 Nor are they barren, for her shallowest brook
 Affords rich matter for the angler's hook,
 Salmon, trout, peal, and other luscious fish,
 With her's no dainty, but an usual dish.
 Store likewise of all fennish fowl do swim
 In winter time upon sweet Tavy's brim ;
 And other kind of covies fly and hop
 From each valley to each mountain's top ;
 Her fields and woods yield likewise noblest game,
 With hound and hawk the hunters range the same,
 To start the hare, and rouse the fallow deer,
 Pursue the fox with ho ! see ho ! see here.
 Her air without is wholesome, and within
 Her bowels stored with choice copper and tin * ;
 But yet observe her more transcendent worth,
 Her happy soil hath nurtured and brought forth
 More noted men than all their bordering towns,
 Or any one place in Britannia's bounds,
 Whose names have been and are of such account
 They've triumph rode from Berwick to the Mount,

* One of the four stannaries of Devon.

Upon the wings of fame for poetry,
 Profoundest law, and school-divinity.
 Rhetorick, gosple preaching, and such parts
 As are most proper to the sons of arts.
 Go to the Inns of Court, and there demand
 Who most renowned amongst the gown-men stand?
 Who could unfold the enigmas of the law,
 Resolve thy doubts, find or correct a flaw,
 Who most employ'd among the sages were,
 At Common Pleas, King's Bench, or Chancery bar,
 Whose chambers most the thronging clients ply'd,
 They'll name three men brought up by Tavy's side*.
 Go to our Oxford University,
 Ask who is best skilled in divinity,
 Who hath the fathers or the school-men read,
 They'll single out a man at Tav'stock bred †.
 Enquire agen in whom there may be found
 Galen and Paracelsus' virtues bound,
 Whose physick seldom due success did want,
 And thou'lt assigned be to a Tav'stock plant ‡.
 Thence walk into our great Metropolis,
 Demand for preaching who most noted is,
 Whose notions are most quaint, and whose great pains
 Are most enamelled with rhetoric strains,
 Ask who for those things hath the lawrell won,
 And they'll assure thee 'tis a Tav'stock man §.
 Go ask the famous poets of our times
 Who best could fancy in seraphick rhimes,
 Whose muse drank deepest at Font Hellicon,
 They'll tell Tav'stock Browne's profoundly done ||.

The author of this piece has the following notes, printed on the
 of the verses, explanatory of his allusions to the great men in
 stion. Note 1. is—"John Glanville, Serjeant at Law, one of the
 ges of the Common Pleas. Sir John Glanville, Kt. his son,
 eant at Law. Sir John Maynard, Kt. Serjeant at Law."

"Dr. Joseph Maynard, late Rector of Exon Coll. Oxon."

"The worthy Peter Elliot, Doctor of Physick, Oxon."

The author says in his note,—“The Rev. Dr. Calamy, London,
 1 enjoyed this man's labour more than 20 years.” This would go
 to prove that the poem was written in the time of William and
 y; as Benjamin Calamy (here alluded to) served long in London,
 there died in their reign. Sherlock preached his funeral sermon.
 we found no other authority than this poem for his being a Tavistock
 1. I have, therefore, not included Calamy in our biography.

“Thomas Browne, born in Tavestock.”

Go coast Great Britain's Isle, and in each creek
 Among the noble sons of Neptune seek
 Who, has swam farthest in the liquid seas,
 Or who first ranged the world's antipodes :
 Who round about the world's vast globe did roll,
 Even from the arctick to the antarctick pole ;
 They will with one consent this verdict make,
 'Twas our IMMORTAL MORTAL, TAV'STOCK DRAKE *.
 Get also 'mongst great Mars his thundering crew,
 And all his warlike champions over view,
 Search whether can be found again the like
 For noble prowess to our TAV'STOCK PIKE †,—
 In whose renowned never-dying name
 Live England's honour, and the Spaniard's shame ;
 Advance then, Tav'stock, and no longer lye
 Enrolled in sheets of such obscurity.
 May generations on thyself insert
 Proportion'd honour to thy great desert ;
 And when that Envy dare to wound thy fame,
 Let her grow leaner by thy rising name.

Having now given you this very curious encomium on our town, I will not venture to add a word more in its praise. I am sorry I do not know the name of the ingenious author, who took so much pains to record the fame of his native place, as he really deserves to be remembered ; but all the efforts I have made to discover it have proved vain. He certainly might be styled our Laureate ; and but for his poem we should never have known that we had such a "Tav'stock plant" as the "worthy Peter Elliot, Doctor of Physic," nor that "Dr. Joseph Maynard, of Exon Coll., Oxford" was also "~~Tav'stock bred~~." I doubt the author's correctness about Calamy, and

* Note three says,—“ The renowned heroe, Sir Francis Drake, born at Crowndle in Tavestock.”

† Note four states,—“ Captain Richard Pike, who fought three Spaniards at once, chosen out of an army of six thousand, and *beat them*.” This must have been the famous Captain Pike, whose name so often occurs in the voyages of Drake.

though I have taken much pains to satisfy that doubt, hitherto I have been unsuccessful. Benjamin Calamy was the son of the nonconformist, and came into the Established Church; he is spoken of by Sherlock as eminent for his piety, learning, and eloquence; but where he was born is not stated.

I have the honour to remain,

My dear Sir,

Very respectfully and truly yours,

A. E. BRAY.

LETTER XXXIV.

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQ.

—

CONTENTS.—Maristow ; its ancient church—Saxon church and font—Tomb of Sir Thomas Wise ; mutilated in the civil wars—Country about Maristow very beautiful—Sydenham House ; it lies in a valley—The picturesque bridge—Delightful woods—The house—Interior courts—Arms of Wise—The gable injured by modern windows—The old gentleman who was the former proprietor of Sydenham—Large room—The Banquet-room ; injured by the carved oak being painted over—The hall small and low—Sydenham garrisoned for King Charles—Taken by Col. Holbourn in 1645—The left gable in a ruinous condition—The family injured by the fines, imprisonments, and sequestrations, the consequences of their loyalty to the unfortunate king—Great staircase—The upper rooms—The old pictures—Nine daughters of Sir Thomas Wise ; represented all beauties—Very curious and interesting portrait of the stately Lady Mary Cary—Pictures injured by cleaning—Portrait of the sister of the famous rebel, Mr. St. John—Portrait of the gallant Col. Arthur Tremaine—Portrait of Bridget Hatherleigh, heiress of Sydenham, and wife of the Colonel—A very clever picture, being the portrait of a lady, and probably painted by Sir Peter Lely—Splendid red bed, temp. Charles I.—Furniture curious—Cabinets—The chamber reminds the writer of a romantic traditionary tale of the time of the civil wars—The tale told—Hangings, arras, &c.—Magnificent horse furniture for the sheriff's lady in the olden time—The shifting panel—The secret door—The concealed staircase ; to what it leads—Eccentricities of the old gentleman, the late Mr. Tremaine—An account of the discovery of some most curious and original letters of the great Sir Bevil Grenville at Stow House, Cornwall—Mr. D'Israeli written to concerning them—His answer—Report of their being destroyed—Amusing anecdotes of the old gentleman—Story of Fuseli's night-mare, &c.—Arms of Tremaine—Antiquity of the family—Twin brothers in the time of Elizabeth—Story of twin sisters of the present day—Lamerton church noticed—Collacombe House ; ancient seat of the Tremaines—Old monuments—Rowe, the poet, said to be born at Lamerton—A Tremaine founded an

hospital at the west end of Tavistock, temp. Richard II.—Thomas Tremaine, the father of sixteen children—Edmund, the second son, followed the fortunes of Edward, Earl of Devon—He suffers with his master; is racked in the tower to discover the secrets of Elizabeth in Mary's time—Rewarded for his zeal, patience, and courage on the maiden queen's accession to the throne—Romantic and interesting particulars respecting the twin brothers, Andrew and Nicholas Tremaine—Their habits, feelings, affections, and pursuits the same—They volunteer to join the English forces in France—Fall before Newhaven in 1563—Their epitaph—Excursion to Mevey—The church—The antique oak—Broken base of a cross—Old house—Ancient character of the houses and cottages around—Swarm of children—Set off for Sheep's-tor—Up-hill road—Autumnal effects—Beautiful scenery—Fagging walk—A striking scene—An attempt to give some idea of it in description—Arrive at the village of Sheep's-tor—Inquire the way for the palace of the Pixies—Visit the church; an ancient building—The school-house; a peep into it—Reflections suggested by a visit to the church-yard—A beautiful passage on the village church and church-yards extracted—Set off for the Pixies' house—The road to it presents scenes of great grandeur and beauty—Character of Sheep's-tor; its blocks of granite, &c.—A beautiful peasant girl becomes guide to the Pixies' house—Handsome women and children at Sheep's-tor—Women of Cornwall and Devon remarkable for beauty—The Pixies' house described—Difficult and dangerous of access—Attempt to climb to it amid the rocks—Obliged to give up the attempt on account of the difficulty—Return by a shorter road—Pass an old house—Reach Mevey—Melancholy and affecting circumstances attending the death of two persons, by cholera, at Sheep's-tor, in 1832.

Vicarage, Tavistock, March 5th, 1832.

MY DEAR SIR,

I PURPOSE in this letter giving you some account of an excursion we made in the autumn of 1831, to a very interesting old house in this neighbourhood; and one that deserves notice in an historical view, as, during the great rebellion, it was gallantly defended in support of the royal cause.

In our way to Sydenham, for so is the old house

called, we visited the church of Maristow, which is beautifully situated on a hill, with a range of fine and venerable lime-trees in front of the sacred edifice. There cannot be a doubt this building is of great antiquity, as we observed above the interior doorway, that leads from the porch into the body of the church, a Saxon arch. I have no doubt it was the remains of the original entrance. This curious arch was deeply buried in whitewash. The font is also Saxon, and of very rich and singular workmanship.

In the church we found an elaborate but heavy tomb of Sir Thomas Wise, Kt., and his lady (Sir Thomas was the builder of Sydenham), temp. Charles I. The effigy of the knight, the size of life, represents him in armour, lying under a canopy, with his wife by his side. The female head is very characteristic; and has that fleshy appearance considered by artists as forming so great a merit in the works of the chisel. What a pity her nose has been knocked off! I saw no inscriptions; but when I recollected this tomb had been erected in the days of the unfortunate Charles, and that the church was near Sydenham house, I felt quite certain that the violence evidently employed in its mutilation had been the handywork of the Covenanters; and I thought of Clarendon and Sir Walter Scott, who have immortalized the days of rebellion. The hands of both figures had been knocked off; and oh, monstrous misappropriation! some wise modern, wishing to repair the damage, had not only made the small mistake of placing the large rough hands of the good knight on the lady; but had also joined to, and decorated his stumps with her slender and

delicate fingers ! We saw the figures of the children round four sides of the tomb ; these were all statues placed on a deep ledge. They had also not been spared in the war made upon the church. At the back of the monument (for the faces of the two principal recumbent figures look to the east) there were seen kneeling, facing each other, a youth and a damsel praying at a desk. These effigies were likewise in the dresses of the time of Charles I. There were, also, on the ledge, two cradles in marble, with infants in them ; the babes being attired in the richest lace, which was most delicately carved ; and there was another little child represented sitting in a chair, and dressed in lace from head to foot. The cradles were square in shape, and not made to rock ; the children were all as chubby as young cherubs are usually represented.

On quitting the church, we continued our ride through a wild, hilly, and picturesque scene, till we arrived at Sydenham, the object of our journey. This most interesting old house was commenced in the time of Elizabeth, and finished in that of James I., by the knight whose effigy is above described. The plan of the house forms the letter E, a compliment often paid by builders to the maiden queen. Sydenham lies in a valley ; a clear stream runs in front of it, leaving space for the road. Over this stream there is a bridge, above which, arising from the banks, hang some fine old trees. On crossing, the road runs up a very steep hill, through a thick wood of such beauty, that nothing more delightful in its kind can be found in Devon. It is to be lamented that a portion of this noble wood was felled by the late possessor, who thus turned the pictur-

esque plantations of his forefathers into money; and truly he could have had no love of old trees, for he actually chose for his lopping the very spot that is seen from the house. This is now replanted; but years must pass away before it can regain anything like its original aspect. The high lands in the immediate vicinity of this princely domain are beautiful in their forms, and, for the most part, richly clothed with wood.

Before the house, which is surrounded by a wall, a pair of very high and open-worked iron gates give access to the interior of the court. There the entire front of the extensive range of buildings presents at one view a magnificent example of the domestic architecture of the age of Elizabeth. Above the centre doorway, to which you ascend by a flight of steps, is seen, within a niche, the arms of Wise, carved, painted, and gilt. The picturesque gables that project from the body of the mansion to make the shape of the letter E, the mullions that support the windows, the grey colour of the stone, the massive, but not inelegant, architecture, all strike the eye of the visitant, and excite so much admiration, that one cannot but regret the days are gone by when such a house as this was the distinguishing and necessary possession of every old English family in the country. I was not a little vexed to find that the gable, to the right hand as we entered, had been despoiled of its beautiful old windows, and common modern sashes substituted! Those removed (judging from what was left in the opposite and corresponding gable) had been very large and handsome, indeed beautiful in their construction, and must have been quite as warm; so that there was no

accounting for the change, excepting that it must have been a whim of a certain old Mr. Tremaine, the father of the late possessor of Sydenham, who was born in the year 1708, and died in 1808. He certainly entertained a particular dislike to everything in true taste, or as it originally stood; for this old gentleman it was who actually took the trouble not only to alter the windows, but to paint a magnificently carved oak staircase with the colours of pink and white! A large room, called the banquet-room, likewise carved in oak, in a way to excite admiration, and most tastefully gilt in various parts, so as to relieve the dark brown of the oak in the carving, he caused to be buried in common house-paint; and had the massive granite chimneypiece, in the great hall, painted likewise! I would have assigned to this worthy a paint pot for his arms, with two brushes proper, by way of supporters. Yet I ought to speak very reverently of him, for he was the father of my husband's godfather.

On entering, I was somewhat disappointed in the hall; it is built too low for such a mansion. Several coats of arms, painted and gilt, but not by the old gentleman, adorn its sides. This hall bears the date of 1658, the time the house underwent some repairs; no doubt they were needed after the civil wars. Sydenham was garrisoned for King Charles, and taken by the Parliament forces, commanded by Colonel Holbourn, in January, 1645. One gable of the house is in a very ruinous condition; we were told it had never been finished. This we considered a mistake; and that the ruinous state in which it is now seen was most probably the consequence of the siege it underwent in behalf of royalty. It is very

likely the family to whom it belonged could not afford such extensive repairs as were required to restore the building to its original condition ; since the Restoration found them poor, having suffered severely by fine, sequestration, and imprisonment ; favours which the liberty men of Cromwell's time were particularly free in conferring upon all those who feared God and honoured the King after the old fashion. I never can believe that a man so costly as Sir Thomas Wise should build this house, live to see it finished, and bequeath it to his son Edward, and leave one gable of it imperfect in the interior ; the very carved doors, which still hang decaying on their rusty hinges, contradict the assertion : it is far more likely that the Parliament troopers made wild work in the house ; or that this gable had been converted into guard-rooms, &c., for stores and ammunition ; no wonder, therefore, it was sacked and ruined.

I saw the place in too hurried a manner (not wishing to intrude upon the present proprietors, who most kindly indulged us with seeing it) to make very minute observations ; but I was particularly struck with the great staircase ; so noble in its proportions, so richly carved, and lighted by a window above eighteen feet in height. We ascended, and went from room to room above. The pictures were numerous, and of great interest. Nine daughters of Sir Thomas Wise, all beauties, and each painted on a separate canvass, still shone in the loveliness of youth, and in the graceful dresses of the time of Charles I., when ladies had not yet shut their eyes to the beauty of the antique statues, nor had fallen into the madness of fancying that a waist

resembling the body of a wasp (a fashion alike destructive of health and of true proportion) was a beauty to be purchased by the squeezing and torture of tight stays, till the very bones are forbidden to grow, and the frame becomes the prey of various and often fatal diseases *. These daughters of Sir Thomas Wise are represented with the hair low on the crown of the head, whilst only a few short, thin curls play over the forehead, and hang in full and thick clusters in the neck; through whose ringlets might be seen, in some of them, the double drop earring of pearl, so common at that period. Several of these heads were really very handsome, and, though not painted by a Vandyke, were far superior to the productions of the subsequent English painters (Sir Peter Lely and Kneller excepted) till the days of Reynolds and Romney, when the English school of portrait painting was, in great excellence, revived.

In another room we saw a picture, though much decayed and without a frame, of great interest.—This represented the stately daughter of the Viscount Carrickfergus, married first to Sir Thomas Wise (by whose side she rests in the church), secondly to Mr. T. Harris, and lastly to Sir Henry Carew (pronounced Cary.) In the picture there is the grand, self-satisfied, and studied air of a very fine lady (not very beautiful, but having on all the decorations of beauty she could possibly hang about her) whilst sitting for her picture. The dress is of

* The writer of this letter having herself known two cases of remarkably fine young women, who, it was proved by surgical examination after death, had endured the greatest tortures of their lengthened illness, and died from the effects of tight stays, takes this opportunity of adding one warning more to the folly, the madness, the sin of a practice which consigns so many to the grave.

the time of Charles I., but the most gay I ever saw of that period; and as a proof that she was determined to exhibit something out of the common mode, suspended by a chain and fastened to her bosom, she had, upon a rich lace collar, an enormous watch, that very much resembled a warming pan. This, in her day, was a more rare trinket than it is at present; but I never before recollect having seen a watch so placed in an old picture. She displays, also, a large ring on one of her fingers, on which, according to tradition, there was engraved this posy in allusion to her three husbands:—

“Thrice happy Mary
Harris, Wise and Cary.”

This portrait is altogether so curious, that it well deserves to be framed, very carefully cleaned, and engraved. Cleaning pictures no ignorant person should attempt; indeed, in this collection, I observed three clever flower and fruit pieces, that had been really beautifully painted, entirely spoilt by the delicate glazing of the transparent colours on an opaque body (the mode generally adopted by Venetian artists) having been entirely destroyed by some rude hand in cleaning their surface. I regret I had not time to note the names of all the different pictures that struck us as being of interest. Amongst others there was a very good one, in the school of Vandyke, probably by a pupil of that great master, which represented the sister of the famous Mr. St. John, who acted so much in concert with Hampden and Pym during the rebellion. This lady was, by marriage, connected with the family of Tremaine, hence we find her picture preserved at this house. Over the chimneypiece, in

the same lower apartment, we observed the portrait of the gallant Col. Arthur Tremaine, who lived to see the monarchy, for which he had fought and bled, restored; and to wed with fair Mistress Bridget Hatherleigh, who at that period had become, for want of male issue, the heiress of Sydenham. Bridget was granddaughter, in the female line, to Sir Thomas Wise (for his son Edward died unmarried), and by her marriage with the brave Colonel the house and lands of Sydenham came to the family of Tremaine. The very letter of introduction presented by the Colonel when he came wooing to the young heiress is still preserved in the house; and I am promised a copy of this very curious epistle. The writer, I understand, in introducing the lover, did not mince the matter; but tells the fair Bridget, that as Col. Arthur's lands and her own lie so near together, she earnestly recommends that both estates may be legally made "conjugal."

How far the lady relished this reference to her property instead of herself, I do not know; but as the Colonel's picture represents a fine soldier-like looking man, one that would speak frankly in love or in war, I dare say she was well pleased; and he probably thought more favourably of Bridget's beauty than I did of the record of it on the canvass that still hangs near his own. I fancied I could detect a scowl on the brow, and an air of firmness and authority, that told tales of a love of petticoat government. I saw many other old pictures, and heard the names of most of them. There were two or three gloomy-looking Roundheads: they had no business amidst so much loyalty. There was also

a very clever picture, about the time of Sir Peter Lely, of a lady remarkable for the grace and elegance of her form. The name of the painter was unknown; but from the style and beautiful colouring in the flesh tints, I could not help thinking this was a portrait by Sir Peter himself.

In one of the sleeping chambers there is a most splendid red bed, of the age of Charles I. It had three prince's feathers, as they are called, within the head of the bed, formed of the same stuff with the furniture. The whole was lofty and elegant, unlike any modern couch, and very low and comfortable for the sleeper. I saw, likewise, a great number of old chests; and felt, I confess, a good deal of woman's curiosity to be peeping into them; fancying that possibly might there be hidden some treasured narrative, some forgotten papers of the eventful times that every object in the house brought vividly before the mind. There were Indian chests too, and old chairs, and rich chased metal tables, and the most costly ancient cabinets, that again set me longing to be peeping—and I thought of the old names by which the little drawers and boxes in such were called,—the *shuttles*; and I thought too of an old story that I had once a mind to turn into a novel, about a lady who died of a broken heart, and would never tell the cause—but when on her death-bed, she pointed with her hand to the cabinet that stood near, and said, “Lift the second shuttle,” she paused;—and ere she could speak again, the hand of death was upon her. Her husband rushed from the bed; and scarcely had she breathed her last, when he found too truly the cause of her melancholy fate revealed by raising

"the shuttle." Before her marriage she had been beloved by a gentleman of great worth, and, more in caprice than from any real displeasure, had slighted him. In a moment of wounded feeling, he mounted his horse, rushed to the battle, and after standing near Charles I. to the last, fell on Newberry field, covered with wounds. The lady had married an officer in the Parliament forces, and convinced, even on her bridal day, that she could neither forget her old love nor be happy with her new, to whom her father had given her hand, she wrote a letter revealing the secret of her soul, and begging to be buried near William. On the envelope were these words beneath a black seal:—

"When I am dead and cold,
Then let the truth be told."

This apartment at Sydenham, its furniture, the bed, the cabinet (all of the time of Charles I.), so exactly suited as an appropriate scene for this melancholy tale, that imagination in a moment suggested the rest of the picture; and I fancied I could see the dying lady, and the husband, and all the painful circumstances of that remarkable event. What a subject would this tale afford for the masterly writer who so powerfully deals in such scenes—the author of the 'Passages from the Diary of a Physician!'^{*} In the chamber I am describing, a whole and complete specimen of the domestic furniture of the period might be found, even to the elegant toys for the ladies; such as letter-stands, pincushion, a box for needle-work, &c. The chairs were covered with what is called the cut and double-

^{*} First published in 'Blackwood's Magazine.'

piled red velvet, in the most beautiful patterns. I saw also in this house, what I had now and then read of in old books, a chamber hung with "watchet hangings." These hangings were of damask, within a frame of oak, and were suspended in the compartments of the wainscot. It occurred to me that here might be seen the distinction between the "arras" and the "hangings." The hangings being, as above stated, hung like pictures on the walls; the arras (originally a rich stuff, manufactured at Arras, in France) being, on the contrary, a piece of long and loose tapestry hanging from the ceiling to the floor, so that any one could slip behind it, as did Polonius, when he paid so dear for hiding. There is still to be seen at Cotele House, in this neighbourhood, a fine specimen of a chamber hung with arras.

At Sydenham we saw too, what I am sure Sir Samuel Meyrick would gladly possess, to place in his superb collection of old armour, &c., at Goodrich Court. One of the Tremain family having been, to use the old phrase, "pricked down for sheriff of the shire," his lady, who I suppose on some state occasion was to ride with her husband in his public capacity, had such a set of horse furniture for her palfrey, as exceeds in magnificence anything I ever fancied of the kind. It is of red velvet, so beautifully fine and closely woven, that not even the smallest root of a thread could be seen; and so carefully was it preserved, that it looked as if just new from the shop. These housings were made to slip over the saddle, and hang loose by the sides like a horse-cloth. They are most elegantly ornamented with the finest silver lace, that appears almost new; and

the crupper, &c., are decorated with a number of silver ornaments representing cockle-shells, chased in the most delicate manner. We saw also the holsters for the sheriff's pistols, and very splendid they were. The whole of these things did not appear to be older than the time of William and Mary: I judge of their age by their corresponding with the like decorations seen in the pictures of that period.

In the banquet-room, where there was such a magnificent carved oak panelling (painted white by the old gentleman), there was one panel contrived to open the same as a door, but not having the slightest appearance that it would do so when seen closed. This opens to a dark, stone closet, with a flight of winding stairs that leads up to the very top of the house, and is secretly connected with other chambers. For many years it has not been explored, owing to its ruinous condition. This is a pity, for the search might lead to the discovery of something hidden during the civil wars. How much I should like, assisted by the light of a torch, to explore these unknown holes and corners of Sydenham; and to disturb the owls and bats that, I dare say, have contrived through some aperture to take possession. I can well believe that the house might have been searched, even by Cromwell's troopers, and the dark closet and the winding stairs have never been detected.

Mr. Tremaine, the present worthy and respected proprietor, does not often reside in this princely but decaying mansion. He inherited it by will from the last old gentleman (he dying unmarried), who, though he had never seen him, left it on account of

his bearing the name, and being a younger branch of the family, with whom however he had kept up no connection.

The late Mr. Tremaine was a good man, kind, sociable, but eccentric. Being single, rich, and having much church patronage, he had many hangers-on; and his house and friendship were objects eagerly sought after by the poor clergy, who longed to find subsistence in the solid patronage of a living. One of those on whom he had bestowed the latter died before his friend, and he left Mr. Tremaine all he had in the world. Dr. Geach, an eminent physician, late of Plymouth, wrote on him the following epitaph, which is certainly somewhat equivocal; for one cannot but perceive that it may have been meant as a compliment to the deceased at the expense of his brethren:

“This was a grateful priest; his wealth, though small,
He to his patron gave, who gave him all.”

Whilst we were conversing with the present proprietor, that gentleman communicated to us the following most interesting circumstance:—

Some years since, Mr. Tremaine represented the county of Cornwall, and whilst canvassing for votes, he chanced to solicit the suffrage of a respectable farmer, who lived in an old house called Stow, in the county. Stow was once the residence of the great Sir Bevil Grenville, who lost his life in a Land-down fight, near Bath. The farmer had discovered in a lumber room of the house an old trunk; when, on examining its contents, he found it contained a mass of papers, all of the time of Charles I., and amongst them a variety of *original letters*: some

addressed to Sir Bevil Grenville; others, copies of letters written by him, in his own hand.

Mr. Tremaine told us, that the farmer was a man of a strong mind, naturally inquisitive after knowledge, and so well had he employed his evenings over these curious documents, that he had made himself familiar with their contents, and showed Mr. T. many of the most interesting. The subjects of one or two of these that gentleman repeated to us. There was a letter by a friend addressed to Sir Bevil, endeavouring to dissuade him from joining the king's cause; and pointing out the dangers to himself and family that must arise from his doing so. With this was found the copy of Sir Bevil's answer, giving, to use Mr. Tremaine's own words, "in manly language," his reasons, alike generous and disinterested, for the determination he had formed to join the injured king. Another admirable letter was addressed by Sir Bevil to the tutor of his son at Oxford, charging him to hold the lad prepared to follow in the steps of his father, as he was resolved not to withhold his son from doing his duty to God and to the king. Clarendon, if my memory serves me truly, speaks of this youth, and says he was but fifteen years old when he took the field.

I understood from Mr. Tremaine that all these letters, so curiously discovered, were highly honourable to Sir Bevil; and that they threw some additional light on the conduct of the royal cause in the West. I felt so deeply interested in the account thus given, that I begged to know if it were possible we might be suffered to examine the papers and to take copies. Mr. Tremaine told me he had copied

one or two sentences of one of the letters, which I should hereafter see, but the letters themselves were no longer within reach; for as he had talked a good deal about them after his interview with the farmer, the affair came at length to the knowledge of Lord Carteret, the proprietor of Stow, who sent for the whole collection, and removed them to his own house.

On our return from Sydenham, Sir Bevil Grenville and his letters still occupied my mind. I knew that Mr. D'Israeli was then employed in completing a work so valuable to English history, his Commentaries on the reign of Charles I. I knew how much that gentleman sought after and valued original papers; and I could not help thinking what a prize these would be to him. I was not acquainted with him; but I thought that circumstance ought not to be of sufficient consideration to prevent my doing what might prove a real service to literature; and, if the truth must be spoken, my enthusiastic veneration both for King Charles and Sir Bevil Grenville made me feel a wish that these papers, honourable no doubt to the memory of both, should be brought forward by one so able to do them justice. This consideration gave me courage; I procured, from my own publisher, the address of Mr. D'Israeli, and wrote him a letter informing him all I knew of the circumstance, and pointing out where the treasure might be found. I was soon gratified by the most handsome letter of thanks from Mr. D'Israeli, who had, even before he answered me, set on foot some inquiry, but had not then met with any friend who could give an introduction to Lord Carteret in order to see the papers.

Surely the name and pursuits of one who has done so much for English literature would have been sufficient.

On this subject I have only to add, that not long before I commenced my letter to you, I received a piece of information, which I most heartily hope may have arisen from some mistake, for doubtless it cannot be true—namely, that these curious papers have been destroyed. If they have *not* been destroyed, it is to be hoped they will one day see the light, as valuable documents of the times in which the writers flourished, and Sir Bevil perished, in so good a cause.

I have heard Mr. Bray relate many circumstances connected with Sydenham, that occurred whilst he visited there when a child. One or two of these are not a little amusing; I shall therefore endeavour to repeat them, as nearly as I can in his own words:—

“The old house, the stories connected with it, and the air of antiquity which every thing presented at Sydenham, made a deep impression on me when a boy; so that my visits there were not a little accompanied with a feeling of awe; and one of them was made in a manner that astonished others as much as it did myself. My godfather (who used at sixty to be styled *young* Mr. Tremaine, as his father, who was living at ninety, was called *old* Mr. Tremaine) one day brought me from school near Exeter. Our progress was slow, for though his carriage, in which he travelled, might be called light, yet the roads were heavy and so bad, that the shades of night surrounded us before we got to the end of our journey. My godfather, who always travelled with a servant mounted as an outrider,

commanded lights; when, to my inexpressible surprise on witnessing the preparation, a long pole (stowed somewhere about the carriage in readiness for the purpose) was produced, at the top of which was affixed a large globular lantern, that, on being lighted resembled a fire balloon, and made a most extraordinary appearance. Mounted and carrying aloft pole and lantern, the outrider went before the coach to the end of our journey, causing every "belated peasant" we chanced to meet on the road to fly before us, alarmed at so unusual a spectacle, and very possibly, when he saw it pursue its sinuous course, like a serpent, towards him, apprehending more than mortal danger in its approach.

"I remember two instances of terror that occurred to me, when a child, at Sydenham, which I connected at the moment with the marvellous and supernatural that filled my head whenever I visited that place.

"Young Mr. Tremaine had decorated the walls of an apartment, adjoining the ancient hall, with a print of Fuseli's Night Mare. It represented a horrid demon squatting on the bosom of a beautiful woman asleep upon a bed, and a mare's head was thrusting itself through the curtains.

"To a child the picture was sufficiently frightful of itself: but in addition to this, as, from the dim light burning in the room where I was left alone, I could only see its general outline, and stood gazing on it, and thinking of devils and witches, I heard a most ominous noise—stump, stump, on the floor of the hall, in slow and regular succession, with a slight soft step between each stump, without seeing

any living being (though the door stood open to the hall) to whom I could attribute such sounds. I was but a mere child, and I dared not venture forth to find out the cause; yet I well remember the chill of superstitious terror that ran through my veins, and the relief it was to my mind when, on communicating the circumstance to my father, as a great secret, he dispelled the mystery by telling me that one of the old footmen had a wooden leg, that he was noted for marching with it in a most solemn pace, and that no doubt his parading through an obscure part of the hall must have made itself audible in the apartment where I was viewing Fuseli's Night Mare with fear and wonder.

"On another evening the maids at Sydenham had left me, before putting me to bed, in the large old kitchen by myself. A hound, escaped from the kennel, ran in, when immediately I heard a loud exclamation of 'Out, Sir, get out, to kennel with you, out I say!' The dog looked about him, saw no one but myself, a little fellow for whom he felt no fear, and did not stir. But immediately after commenced, in smart strokes, the smacking of a whip, which so frightened the intruder, that he hung his tail between his legs, and ran howling off. I was now almost as frightened as the dog, well knowing there was nobody but myself in the old kitchen, and yet the sounds came from the lower end of it. I took courage to see what it could be that made the noise, when I found, to my surprise, that an animal, of the feathered tribe, was thus exercising an assumed power over one of the four-footed creation, for it was no other than a parrot in its cage, that had thus commanded the hound to turn out by a most dexterous imitation of word and whip."

These, and many other little circumstances of my husband's childish days connected with Sydenham he has often told me; and I, being very fond of stories, anecdotes, &c., whether they concern adults, old people, or young children, have carefully treasured them up, in what I once heard a Turk, who spoke broken English, call his "knowledge box," meaning his head.

The family of Tremaine is of ancient standing; their arms, in some measure, form a rebus of their name; they consist of three united arms with clenched hands; and two hands above support a Saracen's head as the crest. I amuse myself with fancying the origin of these bearings must have been that three brothers fought gallantly in the Holy Land, and, having overcome, by their united efforts, some fierce Saracen chief, they brought his head in triumph to Richard of the lion heart. Hence he gave them their arms, and the surname of *Tremaine*, as the three hands that had united to do him such good service in the holy wars. I dare say the present Mr. Tremaine, if he ever sees this letter, will not be a little amused at my finding an origin for his family arms. But the Herald's College, I have heard, are never at a loss in these matters, when called on to satisfy a doubtful point, so I may plead a very high authority for a trifling exercise of the inventive faculty, or, as Butler says—

"For every why to have a wherefore."

However, I need not invent either honours or romance for the family of Tremaine; the first is theirs by a long line of brave and loyal ancestry, and is still worthily sustained in the present representative of their house. And for the last there is a real story of twin brothers, in past days, that has in it romance

enough for a novel, and proves that Shakspeare did not deal in the improbable when he wrote his play of the 'Comedy of Errors.' Indeed I once witnessed an instance of the kind myself, which, had I not seen it, I could scarcely have credited. I remember twin sisters, who used, when I lived in town, for years to sit near me at church, and I could never tell one from the other, if I met either alone; nor did their most intimate friends know any difference, so minutely, so exactly did they resemble each other in every point. Of these young ladies a pleasant story went abroad; but if true or not I cannot pretend to say, as I heard it only from the current report of the neighbourhood in which they lived. One of them had been on a visit to a friend in the country, and there captivated a young gentleman, who became her accepted lover. He followed her to town to obtain her friends' consent; was shown into a room on his arrival, where the other sister, whom he had never seen, was sitting alone, and instantly mistaking her for his betrothed, addressed her as such. The young lady, who had a mind to keep up the joke, let him go on for a few minutes, when the door opened, and in came the other twin. The lover, astonished to find two sweethearts where he expected but one, and not knowing which was the right, felt himself under the necessity of begging they would be kind enough to tell him to which lady he was engaged. This story may have its origin in truth, and been improved upon by the voice of common fame, which seldom lessens wonders; but its very circulation where the sisters lived proves how exactly they must have been alike, for such a tale to gain any ground at all.

The story of the twin Tremaines is not a whit less wonderful, as I am now about to show, on the authority of Prince.

There is, nearly three miles from Tavistock, a pretty sequestered village called Lamerton; of which Mr. Rowe was the rector, and where, it is said, in this part of the world (though Johnson says otherwise), his son, the celebrated dramatic poet, was born. A small stream waters this picturesque spot; many fine old trees, the surrounding hills and valleys, and several thatched cottages, render it altogether a scene of great variety and most pleasing in its character. The old church, too, has that interest which ever accompanies the Gothic and venerable monuments of past days, when the house of prayer was a house of beauty and repose, and the nobles and wealthy of the land thought it an honour to contribute to the building of the church. It is no longer so; well, indeed, might Espriella, the delightful Spanish traveller, say, "as we think more of ourselves, and less of religion, more of this world, and less of the next, we build better houses and worse churches." In those days, too, the clergy were held in that reverence which their sacred character and their high mission entitled them to receive from all orders and classes of men; when the world was wise enough to be taught the way to heaven by their appointed guides, and did not go about to lose themselves in wandering after every new sect, whose chief merit was a heresy in opposition to the Established Church.

In the parish of Lamerton is Collacombe*, an old house that for generations was the seat of the

* In the hall window of this house are 3545 small panes of glass.

Tremaines (in their origin a Cornish family) before the marriage of Col. Arthur with Bridget Hatherleigh induced them to remove their dwelling to the more splendid mansion of Sydenham. When we visited the church, we were much pleased with viewing the old monument there existing of the family of Tremaine. The figures, in high relief in front of the base, are executed in a very superior style of art, and deserve well to be drawn and engraved, before time shall have destroyed them altogether; for they have already suffered many injuries; and the following tale will serve to show how much a feeling of more than ordinary interest connects itself with this old tomb in the little sequestered church of Lamerton. If Rowe might be born here or not, he must often have visited it whilst his father was rector; and I can fancy his eye and heart must have frequently been engaged in contemplating the monument; for a poet could not look on this silent record of the dead, whose lives had been so marked with wonder from the very hour of their birth, and whose mortal career had closed under such melancholy circumstances, without feeling that generous sympathy, that tenderness and pity, the inseparable accompaniments of a poetic mind; feelings, unless sadly blunted and perverted, that add the charm of pure and natural affections to his verse.

But before I speak of the twin brothers, I must say a few words respecting their father and his family. One of his ancestors, in the reign of Richard II., founded an hospital at the west end of the town of Tavistock, and dedicated it to St. George. Thomas Tremaine, the parent of the celebrated

twins, had in all eight sons and as many daughters. Edmund, the second of this numerous issue, became the devoted follower of Edward Earl of Devon and Marquess of Exeter, and suffered severely by his unshaken attachment to that nobleman during his many troubles. Indeed, the fidelity and courage of Edmund were put to a hard trial, which he sustained with noble constancy and resolution; for the Marquess, having been committed to the Tower, as well as the Princess Elizabeth, on suspicion of being concerned in Wyatt's rebellion, Queen Mary, or her counsellors, thought that young Tremaine must have some knowledge of his master's affairs. They caused him, therefore, to be racked in the Tower of London, in the hope that he would reveal enough to prove the guilt of the Marquess and the Lady Elizabeth. But no tortures could compel him to accuse the innocent, or to betray the confidence of his friend. To the honour of the maiden Queen be it spoken, she did not forget the fidelity he had evinced under such a cruel test; as, on her accession to the throne, she rewarded Edmund by making him one of the clerks of her Privy Council.

Nicholas and Andrew, sons of the afore-named Thomas Tremaine, were twins; they were born, as well as Edmund, at Collacombe House, in Lamer-ton. Prince says of them—"They possessed, from very good testimony, so great a likeness of person and sympathy of affection, as can hardly be paralleled in history." They were of equal height, and exact form, had the same-coloured hair, and were of such close resemblance in feature and gesture, that they could not be known the one from the other, even by their own parents, brethren, or friends. To

distinguish them they would wear a knot of different-coloured ribands, and sometimes, in sport, they would change them and their clothes, which occasioned many playful mistakes, and produced, perhaps, with young men in an hour of frolic, scenes that might have rivalled, in their pleasantry, those in the comedies of the Roman and English dramatists.

So great, indeed, was the sympathy existing between them, in mind as well as body, that their very affections were the same, for they loved or disliked the same persons and things, followed the same pursuits, were lively or melancholy at the same season, and, more wonderful than all, if one was be sick, the other was so, though apart, and without any knowledge of his brother's illness. So much did they love each other, that they could not endure to be long separated, and they would eat, drink, sleep, wake, study, or play together, as if they had but one soul animating two bodies.

In the year 1563, these brothers bore arms among the English forces sent into France : the one as a captain of horse, the other as a volunteer. In one of the many engagements near the town of Newhaven (now Havre de Grace), Andrew and Nicholas stood side by side. Throughout their brief military career they had displayed the greatest courage, being ever foremost in the post of honour and of danger. On this day they acted with an energy that was not less exemplary to others than it was hazardous to themselves. At last one of the twins fell ; the other instantly took his place, and seemed bent on sharing his beloved brother's fate : no entreaty could induce him to withdraw from so dangerous a station. For

some time he maintained it with unabated courage, and at length fell dead on the spot. The monument in Lamerton church is that of their family; most probably their remains were brought home, and there deposited, as the following epitaph on Nicholas and Andrew appears inscribed on a tablet of marble, with several rude rhymes to the memory of the same race :—

“ These liken’d twins, in form and fancy one,
Were like-affected, and like habit chose ;
Their valour at Newhaven siege was known,
Where both encounter’d fiercely with their foes ;
There one of both sore wounded lost his breath,
And t’other slain, revenging brother’s death.”

Before I conclude my letter, I purpose giving you some slight account of another excursion in our neighbourhood that much delighted us. It was to Meavy. The village thus called is situated in a beautiful valley, watered by a stream so clear, that every pebble may be seen in its bottom. The church, which has nothing remarkable in it, is of plain architecture: its date, I should think, was not earlier than the beginning of the fifteenth century.

The great curiosity of Meavy is the oak, which stands just without the churchyard; it is a most noble ruin of that king of forest trees. The top is quite bald with “dry antiquity;” but from the various branches about the centre still sprout leaves of a beautiful bright green, though when we saw them they were somewhat changed and crisped by the touch of autumn. The trunk of this mighty tree is immense in circumference, and so hollow, that it appears to be supported by scarcely anything more than the outward shell connected with the roots.

This noble piece of antiquity is still imposing ; it looks, indeed, an emblem of sinking majesty, and inspires feelings of veneration and awe, not unmixed with those which arise from reflecting on the vanity of years ; since Time, whatever be their strength or their continuance, will at last make them, even as this tree, fall before him. There is no tradition respecting the age of the great Meavy oak ; but I doubt not it witnessed the Saxon heptarchy, if not the Roman Conquest ; nor is there anything extravagant in the supposition, when we recollect that in the survey of Dartmoor (still preserved in the office of the Duchy of Cornwall), and made soon after the Norman Conquest, the oaks in Wistman's Wood are described very much the same as they appear at this day*.

Close to the oak stands the broken base of the cross that is usually found before the entrance to a country church. The school-house, as old as the days of Edward IV., is a most picturesque building, and stands near the churchyard †. There is, too, an ancient over-shot mill in the village that would form a sweet picture ; and the half of a house (the rest having been lately taken down) that I well remember when it presented the complete form of the letter E ; it was built in the days of Elizabeth, and was no doubt the manor-house. One remarkable circumstance seemed to distinguish both the village and neighbourhood of Meavy : it is that, excepting one new-built, we did not see a single

* I am indebted to Archdeacon Froude for this curious piece of information.

† I hear it is quite altered since we saw it.

house, barn, or cottage of a later period than the times of Henry VII. and VIII., and Elizabeth, and many of an earlier date.

The swarm of children in this village, all with cheeks as full, round, and red as an apple, that grouped together on every step of the broken cross, greatly amused us, and we seemed no less to amuse them. They watched our ponies with delight, laughed as they whisked their long tails, pulled each other as we passed by, and pushed a shy little boy forward to bob his head, by way of a bow; and, lastly, they admired our John's new buttons; but not so my straw bonnet, which I heard one little girl very audibly whisper to another was not so pretty as "Betsy's Sunday one." We left our carriage, John, ponies, and children, about the oak, whilst we walked down to the bridge: it is formed of one high arch that crosses a beautiful river, where we watched the trout playing about for some time, since, such was the perfect purity and clearness of the stream, we could see them as plainly as if they were gold and silver fish in a glass globe of water.

We next inquired our way to Sheep's Tor (or Shittistor, its real name, and as I saw it spelt in the old deeds at Mr. Radcliffe's at Warleigh), and, being directed to follow the road through the village, were told that a mile and half's walking would bring us to it. We set off, but soon found it was a Scotch mile and a half, with a *bittock*.

The whole of the road was so up-hill, that it was well we had such a succession of beautiful scenery, or I should have been tempted to give way to weariness,

and have lain down by the road side. The pencil, not the pen, must do justice to what we saw ; and my alternate complaints at the rough stones, the hill, the labour of the ascent, and exclamations of delight about the scenery, exceedingly amused my fellow-traveller. The land to the left (on the opposite side of the beautifully-wooded valley, with its river winding amidst it) presented the finest forms of bold, intersecting, abrupt hills, each with a granite crown or tor upon its head. Tired as I was, I could not resist pulling out my sketch-book to mark in their general outlines, as a memorandum. The mellow tints of autumn upon the woods, greens, browns (russet, or tawny), produced altogether a rich and varied combination of colour ; whilst in some places, the leaves being much fallen, we saw distinctly, yet not nakedly, the ramifications of the trees, their boles often seen hung with ivy or covered with moss. At length we came to a pretty ancient stone cottage ; near it there was an old and upright granite cross, about ten feet high. Here two roads branched off, both leading in the same direction (only the upper being much longer and roundabout than the lower), and unfortunately we took the most toilsome of the two, and so pursued our way up-hill, up-hill, still fagging through a road that was made to bid defiance to all things in this world but a broad-wheeled waggon, or a pair of Irish legs.

I thought we should never even get in sight of Sheep's Tor, and we talked of giving it up as hopeless, notwithstanding we admitted the scenery around us to be well worthy the trouble we had taken ; for we could now command one of the finest views in the

whole county of Devon. We saw before us the extensive range of the Dartmoor heights; the lovely vale of Meavy, Roborough Down, and the waters of the Hamoaze forming the middle distance; and we actually looked over Mount Edgcumbe and the Cornish hills, and could see the ocean beyond like a sheet of silver, in one broad glitter, reflecting the sun; whilst the heights in that vicinity, so lofty in themselves, seemed to lie beneath, and, with the upper air, were of one deep ultra-marine hue. The effect was sublime; I lost all sense of fatigue as I looked upon it—so much will a strong feeling of the beautiful overcome even the weakness of the body; and I looked till I longed, with Ariel, “to sail on the curled cloud” over such a scene. But cold reality will at last drive away even the raptures of fancy: we had still a long and toilsome road to trudge through; and so, for lack of wings, I was obliged once more to move on my feet, though they ached sadly with the journey.

We hailed with hope a little ugly, modern, white cottage, that now appeared in sight. It was but a short distance from the road, yet I could not summon resolution enough to go out of the way one step to it; but Mr. Bray did, to ask if we were in the right track for Sheep's Tor, and was answered—“Yes, Sir, no great ways, only a mile and a half off!” “Oh, my poor feet,” said I; “but courage and *Esperanza*, we will go on!” So on we went again; still the same labour and the same beautiful scene varying at every step before our eyes; whilst in these elevated regions we breathed an air so pure and keen, that it would have made even the finest lady eat at least half a

pound of beef for her dinner; and I began to feel so hungry, that I regretted I had not had prudence enough to furnish my little basket with something else than a sketch-book.

At length, on a sudden turn round the hill, a scene presented itself which made even me, prepared as I had been by Mr. Bray's account to expect something magnificent, start and exclaim with admiration and wonder. No doubt, also, the glorious effects of the sky (for it was truly a painter's day) added tenfold beauty to all we saw. There is no describing scenery; one slight sketch with the pencil is worth a hundred pages of mere description. I again made a rude outline of what was before us: yet I must say something, as my sketch is not sufficiently filled up to be of any use as an illustration, though it is a memorandum to myself.

Below us lay the valley (through which we still had to pass): it was very close and narrow, and the road abruptly runs up the steep hill beyond: it is skirted by trees all the way to the little village of Sheep's Tor, decorated with its ancient church. This building, and the village itself, when their situation is compared with the mighty Tor towering above them in the background, look as if they were in a valley; yet the hill to be ascended before they can be reached is truly formidable. This we mastered; and came at length to a small space somewhat level, where a few broad flat stones formed a little bridge over a pretty, clear, and gurgling stream: near this stood some old cottages; and we soon found ourselves in the village. There we vainly endeavoured to procure a guide to what a good woman we talked with called "*Piskie House*," on the

side of Sheep's Tor. *Piskie House* is a natural fissure, or narrow cavern amongst the rocks, where Elford the royalist (and one of the characters of my tale in manuscript*) was said to take shelter for a considerable time, to avoid the pursuit of Cromwell's troopers. One little boy told me he was afraid to go there; and his mother truly said "That it was a critical place for children." We then went to the church, a pretty Gothic building, in some parts as old, I should think, as the fourteenth century; in others, windows and doors had been introduced, evidently the work of the sixteenth. Over the doorway, well carved in granite, and placed in a little square niche, was a death's head, with ears of corn sprouting out of the holes for the eyes, no doubt in allusion to the passage of St. Paul. Beneath were these words: "*Mors janua vitæ.*" Above, "*Anima resurgat,*" and "*Hora pars vitæ.*" By looking through the church windows, which were very low, we could see perfectly well the interior. A finely carved, painted, and gilt Gothic screen still remains, though much injured by time. There was, too, a Gothic oak pulpit. The school-house stands near the sacred edifice; it is of great antiquity. No creature being in the house, I ventured to open the ponderous, nail-headed oak door, and walked into a little hall. I soon saw all within was quite in its old state, panelling of oak, &c.; but nobody being at home, and fearing I might be taken for a thief if any one suddenly returned, I walked out again, not having half satisfied my curiosity for peeping

* Now published under the title of "*Warleigh,*" &c., a legend of Devon.

into such vestiges of past times ; and just as I retreated, a low savage growl that met my ears from the interior made me understand that my visit had roused some Cerberus, who very probably would not have given me so civil a welcome as I might fancy one bent on antiquarian pursuits entitled to receive.

I returned to my husband (with whom I had not been able to prevail to get him to join me in trespassing on the school-house) as he stood talking to one of the villagers in the churchyard. We paused for some little while around the graves, reading the few tomb-stones before we continued our progress.

I never can visit a country churchyard without feelings of so mixed a character, that I should find it difficult to define them ; there is so much of pleasure, so much of melancholy (the most refined of all pleasures) in the mood inspired by the scene. The hope of the living, the rest of the dead, then fill the mind : we think of the joy of the infant christening ; of the marriage rite ; the bells that summon us to the holy duty on the holy day ; the blessing of prayer and praise to the Father of all good, and to the Son, the author and finisher of our faith and our salvation ;—the rite of burial, that noblest service of a liturgy truly sublime ; the sorrow of friends as they surround the grave, and hear those solemn words, “ Ashes to ashes, dust to dust ! ” which strike with a chill like that of death on the mourning heart, as the poor remains of all that was once loved (better, may be, than life itself) are consigned to the dark and narrow house, where no sound shall strike on the “ dull cold ear of death ” till it comes

in that dread peal that proclaims the judgment of the earth.

What subjects are these to dwell upon—what awful thoughts, what deep feelings do they not inspire! And who can visit a country churchyard, surrounded by all the quiet sanctity of death, and remain insensible? If there are those who can do so, I would not envy them an indifference which shuts out the most salutary and ennobling feelings of the mind,—those that bring us nearer to God, and to the unseen things which are eternal. But why should I attempt to talk about the church and churchyards, when there is a passage of unequalled beauty on the subject that I cannot here resist giving? It is one I never yet could read without a tear.

“The peasant, however much his religious education may be neglected, cannot grow up without receiving some of the natural and softening impressions of religion. Sunday is to him a day of rest, not of dissipation; the Sabbath bells come to his ear with a sweet and tranquillizing sound; and though he may be inattentive to the service of the church, and uninstructed in its tenets, still the church and the churchyard are to him sacred places: there is the font in which he was baptized; the altar at which his parents became man and wife; the place where they and their fathers before them have listened to the word of God; the graves wherein they have been laid to rest in the Lord, and where he is one day to be laid beside them. Alas for him who cannot comprehend how these things act upon the human heart *!”

* ‘Essays Moral and Political;’ Essay the Fourth, ‘On the State of the Poor,’ &c. Vol. 1st, p. 112. Murray, 1832.

We quitted the churchyard and set off on our road, which wound up the hill crowned by the majestic Tor, the Tor itself producing the most beautiful and striking effect when seen in combination with the church. As we rose, so did this mighty object seem to rise with us, and to grow more and more imposing the nearer we drew to it. For some way up its ascent grass may be seen, springing from a light soil formed of decayed vegetable matter on a substratum of granite. When we reached within a short distance of what might be called the bosom of the Tor, which spread above us in a bold and shelving sweep of about two hundred feet, the granite was totally bare, saving where it was here and there covered by its coating of mosses and lichens. It lies tossed about in enormous masses in every possible direction; now appearing as if piled together mass on mass, tower above tower, whilst vast and innumerable fragments lay on their sides, presenting their acute angles in a manner that brought to mind a petrified sea of breakers. Of these there are thousands and thousands all the way up to the very summit, which is flat or table-formed, and very precipitous towards its southern extremity. On our way up we inquired at a cottage that stood by the side of the road if we could procure a guide to the Pixie-house; for so many years had elapsed since Mr. Bray visited the spot, that he did not immediately recollect its situation. A young woman who lived at this cottage came out with a fine child in her arms, and very good-naturedly offered to become our guide: she said she had been there once, but she did not think I could reach it, as it was a

rough, dangerous place ; and I soon found she spoke the truth.

I never saw a peasant girl, for she scarcely appeared to be twenty years old, with whom I was more struck than with Jane Luscombe, for that was her name. She wore hob-nailed shoes, and nothing could be more homely and poor than the whole of her dress. She had no stays, so that her waist had its full size, and every movement of her noble figure was peculiarly graceful. Her head was a study for a painter ; the features regular and delicate, with a deep blue eye that was radiant in its expression ; and these beauties were rendered of the highest interest by the kind, modest, and good-natured character of her countenance. I would ask no other recommendation for the lovely Jane, as I am certain such a countenance could not deceive : I am sure she is simple, in the best sense of the word, and no less gentle and feeling. Her complexion was tanned a good deal by the sun ; but where her neckkerchief had slipped aside I saw a throat finely formed of a dazzling whiteness. I was so delighted with Jane that I almost forgot the Pixie-house, as I enjoyed a pleasure, which has ever been to me one of a very high order, that of looking on a beautiful human face.

Jane and I soon became good friends, for I admired her fine baby, as did Mr. Bray, and that was the way to the mother's heart. She told us her husband was a labouring man ; that, in the hope to do better, he was about to remove to Plymouth ; she was very poor, and the child in her arms was the youngest of three. Thank God, she said, they

were healthy and happy, though she could seldom afford to buy meat, and she nursed the baby on milk and water. I shall never forget the goodnature with which she guided us over rocks and stones, all the while carrying the child, that was no light burthen, to find out the Pixie-house; yet such were her feelings, about the kindness due to the stranger and the traveller, that it was with extreme difficulty, and not, till urged and even entreated by me to do so, that she would take anything from Mr. Bray, as some trifling recompense for the trouble we had given her. Nor must I leave the subject of our fair guide without observing that the very air of Sheep's Tor seems to be friendly to beauty: the women and children in the village we had before remarked were very pretty, and had the finest complexions that could be seen; and Mr. Bray told me that when he asked his way at the cottage, where I felt too tired to go with him, a woman came out and spoke to him whose face was truly beautiful. Indeed many of the peasantry of Cornwall and Devon are distinguished by their personal attractions more perhaps than in any other county of England. I remember one evening when Mr. Bray, my mother, brother, and self were returning from Cotele, a woman, carrying a child and dressed literally in rags, crossed our path; and judge how striking she must have been when we each exclaimed, immediately on seeing her, "Did you ever see any thing so beautiful?" I regret I do not know who she was, as she realized all that even a poet could dream of female beauty in a human form.

To return to the Pixie-house. Alo't amidst the most confused masses of rock, that looked as if they

had been tossed about by the fiends in battle, in a place which seemed (so it appeared to me at least) as if inaccessible to any mortal creature, there was seen a somewhat projecting stone like a pent-house. Beneath was a cleft between two low rocks. This is the entrance to the palace of the Pixies, and the cavern where Elford is said to have found a retreat from persecution. I do not here describe it, having, in the Dartmoor letters, already given you Mr. Bray's account of it. How Elford could live there; how food could be conveyed to him, or how any living thing but a raven, a crow, or an eagle could make his home in such a spot, is to me, I confess, a puzzle; and had not the paintings on the interior sides of the rocks, executed by Elford, been really seen in these latter days to bear witness to the fact, I should have doubted the tradition altogether.

Thinking that if Elford got up thither (and I knew that Mr. Bray had done so many years before) I too could do the same, I ventured up a few of the rocks; but though I did not fear for my neck, I did for my shins, as the deepest holes (so hidden, too, by soft moss, that they became traps) lay between the masses of granite, in the steep and fearful ascent to the Pixie-house. What with stepping and jumping from rock to rock, Mr. Bray having, as a sailor would say, taken me in tow, and pulled me over one or two that were of formidable height and difficulty (rising one above the other, in their ponderous masses, like a flight of steps), I certainly got somewhat near the spot that had so much excited my curiosity; nay, having at last been compelled to go on all-fours, I crawled over a few rocks

more, but was forced to give it up, finding the attempt much too hazardous, and that an accident might be attended with serious consequences. Exhausted and almost worn out, I lay down whilst Mr. Bray continued the attempt; but not being quite so resolute in conquering these kind of difficulties as he was twenty years ago, at last he gave in too; and then came the labour of helping me down again, which he found not a whit less troublesome than pulling me up.

We had now to resume our weary way back again to Meavy; and I never was so tired in all my life as when we reached the village, though, thanks to Jane Luscombe, our road was shorter in returning than in going, as, by her direction, we crossed the fields instead of wandering round about them. In our way back we passed a beautiful place; it was a house bearing over the door the date 1610. It is called Knolle, and lies sheltered in a most sequestered and romantic dell. It was altogether a house and scene suited for romance: if Jane had lived there, and been unmarried, she might have become the heroine.

On our return to Meavy we found John, still surrounded by the children, ready to receive us. The ponies had long since eaten their provender, and stood ready harnessed to carry us home. John had been on the look-out and had grown uneasy, fearing we had met with some mischance amongst the rocks. Recollecting, after we were gone, that the basket with our luncheon had that day been forgotten, he had very good-naturedly saved for us the bread and cheese that he had provided for his own refreshment. We did not refuse a share, and

might have had the whole, and to this act of thoughtfulness on his part we were indebted for being rescued from the cravings of hunger. And moreover our John, who is a bit of a naturalist, and as kind and single-hearted a soul as ever breathed, had just seen some rare bird that he wanted to show to "mistress," but she came too late for the sight. The good-natured creature and the children had got so well acquainted during our absence, that I heard them ask him to come again soon and bring the ponies with him. They gave us a shout on leaving the village, and we drove home as fast as the road from Meavy to Roborough Down would let us. Once we had to pass over so bad a place, and received such a jolt, that we nearly had an upset, to complete the adventures of the day.

Before I conclude this letter I purpose mentioning a melancholy instance of two deaths, by cholera, that occurred in the little village of Sheep's Tor in the summer of 1832, when that fatal disease raged with such violence at Plymouth. The appearance of cholera in this remote village was deemed so extraordinary (as the deceased persons had held no communication with Plymouth, indeed had scarcely stirred from home, and lived with the utmost cleanliness in such a healthy, elevated spot), that the circumstance induced a very particular inquiry, when the following facts were ascertained:—

There lived at Plymouth a man and his wife named N——; they had two children, and pleaded such extreme poverty, that, whenever they chanced to see a friend or relative, they made it a rule to get out of them a sixpence or a shilling as a relief to their alleged necessities. The cholera came upon

them like a thief in the night, and N——, his wife, and both the children were in a few hours dead! The brothers of the deceased man now proceeded to the house to give orders for the interment of this fallen family, and to see what effects might be left in their dwelling of supposed poverty. They found fifty or sixty sovereigns, and a bill on a country bank for about seventy pounds! with clothes and other things. You will be shocked to read what next occurred.

Unawed by the fearful spectacle before their eyes, and as if they bore “a charmed life” that was incapable of sharing the danger so apparent, these two brothers quarrelled about the division of N——’s property, and actually *fought over the corpse!* This indecent scene of strife alarmed the neighbourhood; the constables were sent for, and the brothers decamped. One, the most violent, possessed himself of some of his *dead brother’s clothes*, and fearful of the consequences of having committed a breach of the peace, set off for Sheep’s Tor (about seven miles from Plymouth, and as many from Tavistock), and took refuge in the cottage of a man and his wife who there kept a little village shop, and to whom he was related. This ruffian, who had fought over the body and brought away the infected clothes, received no injury; but, alas, the poor honest couple who sheltered him caught the fatal disease, died, and were buried in the churchyard close to which they lived. On the morning of the wife’s death (only the day after her husband) a poor orphan boy, I am told, came into Tavistock to say to the doctor—“that father and mother both were gone, and he had been left alone with the dead!”

Is not this most melancholy story a proof (if proof were wanting) that the pestilence is contagious? and is it not also an example of one of those mysterious acts of Providence which we cannot fathom? since, in a mere human view of the subject, one would be tempted to say that the innocent had received the punishment due to the guilty. But who shall judge the ways of God; who shall scan the secrets of his hidden providence?

I have another melancholy story to tell about cholera, but as it occurred in Tavistock, I reserve it for some future letter; in the interval allow me the honour to remain,

My dear Sir,

Very respectfully and sincerely yours,

ANNA ELIZA BRAY.

LETTER XXXV.

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQ.

CONTENTS.—A visit to a friend—Miss Dinham—Her amiable character—Her family—Extraordinary dream—The story narrated—Thomas Henwood, his courage and promptitude, in what circumstances displayed, narrated—Receives the silver medal—The late Major Smith of the royal marine artillery—A sketch of his life; his gallantry in action, &c.—His illness and death—Is buried at Tavistock—Mr. John Hitchens—His great genius—The peculiar character of his talents—He neglects his own powers—He cannot copy—His great capabilities—Two brothers, the Robjohns—Their ingenuity—Self taught; they construct an organ—Mr. Peirce; his talents for mechanical inventions—Mary Colling; a notice of her—Her story not here fully repeated, because before narrated—How she taught her canary bird to talk—Her amiable conduct after the publication and success of her little volume.

Vicarage, Tavistock, April 17, 1833.

MY DEAR SIR,

THERE is in this town a lady for whom I entertain the highest respect and esteem; and knowing her to be very intelligent, I called on her this morning to ask her, as she has lived here many years, if she could afford me any additional information respecting Tavistock. She knew nothing more about our town than the historical circumstances relating to Orgar, &c., already detailed in these letters; but, in the course of conversation, she mentioned so remarkable a story concerning her own family, that I requested her to let me take down the particulars in writing, and asked her if she

would object to my naming them to you in the present correspondence. She said certainly not, and that I was at liberty likewise to mention her name as my authority for what was stated. I rejoice in this, as I should not like to mention these things without doing so; and a more respectable authority than Miss Dinham's can nowhere be found: she is a woman of such strict principles and worth, that whatever she says may be relied on, whether it concern the least or the most important matter. My friend is advanced in life; for years she has been a sufferer from almost constant illness of a very painful nature; and the patience, the resignation, even the cheerfulness with which she bears her afflictions have often excited my warmest sympathy and esteem. But all her trials throughout life, and they have been many, Miss Dinham considers as the dispensation of a wise Providence, and a murmur never escapes her. She is remarkably well read in the best authors of her own language, has strong good sense, and has written sometimes in the hours of sickness some feeling poetry. She is a member of one of the oldest families in Cornwall, that came into this country with the Conqueror, and settled in Cornwall. They took their name from Dinant, a castle of which they were the lords in Normandy. In process of time the name became corrupted into Dinan, or Dinham, and many brave and loyal men have, through several generations, maintained the honour of their ancient house.*

My friend's brother, the late Mr. Edmund Dinham, was the lineal descendant of the eldest branch:

* Oliver de Dinan of Cardinham, Cornwall, summoned to Parliament as a baron in the reign of Edward I.

the circumstances I have to relate concerning him occurred whilst Miss Dinham was a child. She was on a visit at her cousin's, Sir John Philipps of Boscastle, Cornwall; but she well remembers hearing the event much talked of at the time, and afterwards frequently repeated to her by her late mother. I am thus particular, because stories of such a nature as that I have to mention can seldom be traced to the parties so immediately concerned in them.

About fifty years ago Mrs. Dinham dreamed that her son Edmund, then a child, had fallen into the river Cam, in a deep pool called the Horse Pool, at Camelford, in Cornwall; and that she saw the boy floating on the surface of the water dressed in a little red tunic, which he commonly wore. She awoke soon after, got up and hastened down to the breakfast parlour, where her husband had been some time before she rose. She repeated the dream to him, and he laughed at her for indulging superstitious fears, and said dreams were never worth attention.

The dream however dwelt upon her mind, and when the maid brought in the boy dressed in the red tunic she did not like to see it, but nevertheless let the dress pass unnoticed, thinking her husband would laugh at her still more if she expressed any misgivings about the little fellow's frock. That day, however, she kept more than usually a careful eye over him; but on being called off for a short time, on her return she missed the child. He must have run out at the door during her short stay in another part of the house. She instantly took the alarm, and inquired amongst the neighbours if they

had seen the boy, thinking and hoping he might have strayed to play with other children at some house near her own. Not finding him, the recollection of the river Cam rushed across her with fearful forebodings, and she ran down to the spot that had been so deeply impressed on her by the dream, in an agony of mind no tongue could describe. Judge what were her feelings when, on drawing near the banks of the stream, she was met by several persons, bearing the poor boy, his little red tunic streaming with water, livid and senseless, and showing no other sign of life than that of bleeding violently at the nose. The mother exclaimed, in a distracted manner, "Good God! you have taken him out of the Horse Pool! Is he dead or alive?"

"He was taken out of the Horse Pool," replied one of the men who was carrying along the body, "but how could you know it? he is but this moment saved! We hope there is life."

The manner of his preservation from a watery grave was not a little remarkable. I shall give this also, as I wrote it down from his sister's lips. A woman who was the laundress of the family, but who on that day was working at another house in the neighbourhood, had occasion to wash her tubs. Something, she said, possessed her, she could not tell why, that she would go down to the river to do it, which she had never done before. She set off on her errand, and had not far to go, for the river was near the house. Whilst so employed, she thought she saw the dress of a child floating upon the water. She stopped a minute or two and looked, and it disappeared. This alarmed her, and she waded along the bank of the river towards the spot where she had

last seen the object that excited her surprise. It rose again to the surface of the waters, and she then saw it was a child. Anxious to save it, she waded on towards the deep part called the Horse Pool, but from the sandy and shelving nature of the ground she lost her footing at every step, and the stream was carrying her forward towards the fatal pool.

She screamed fearfully for assistance, and saw the red tunic, the skirt of which could now alone be seen, sink again. Her reiterated cries at length brought some hay-makers, who were working in a field near the banks of the river, to the spot, at the instant she was herself beginning to sink; but she had resolution and recollection sufficient, even in those moments, to call out—that a child had sunk in the deep part of the Horse Pool. They gave immediate assistance; the woman was brought safe to the banks; but the pool by this time had become so puddled that the poor boy could not be seen. One man, expert in swimming, plunged under water, and brought up Edmund Dinham, apparently lifeless.

On his being conveyed home, Mr. Marshall, at that time a surgeon of great eminence in Cornwall, was instantly sent for; fortunately he was on the spot, and without delay obeyed the summons. On his first arrival, he considered it a hopeless case. All those means usually taken to resuscitate the expiring spark of human life were applied, and at length with complete success. Edmund Dinham was saved, and lived to become a worthy and honourable member of society. He died about eighteen months ago, in Cornwall, where, after an active life, he had retired to end his days.

Amongst the remarkable characters in this town deserving particular notice is Thomas Henwood, a youth whose promptitude and intrepidity in saving the life of a fellow-creature merits the highest praise, and has been rewarded by a silver medal from the Humane Society of London, and, above all, by that self-satisfaction which the remembrance of the circumstance must afford him to the last hour of his existence. Thomas Henwood, the son of poor but respectable parents, was about fifteen years old when the event I have to detail occurred. He was a lad of a quiet disposition, modest in his address, and always steady and industrious in his calling.

On Tuesday, Oct. 31st, 1826, a child of three years old, the son of Mr. Long, of the town mills, whilst at play near the leat, fell into the stream. Providentially they were not working at the time. The child floated down the narrow channel towards another fulling-mill, but passed out at the sluice, and by the force of the current was carried across the river Tavy, towards the second arch of the Abbey, or Guile Bridge. The river was high in consequence of late rains. The body was rapidly approaching; had it passed under the arch all would have been over, since only a few yards beyond it there is a wear, or fall of water, partly over rocks, where no human means could have rescued the infant. At this fearful crisis, when nothing of the child could be seen but one of its little arms raised above the water, young Henwood, aware of the perilous condition of the infant, and that the moment it passed under the arch all chance to save

it would be over, without the pause of a moment, or a thought for his own safety, instantly leaped the parapet, and from the embankment plunged into the river. The waters reached above his shoulders : he struggled with them in extreme peril of his own life, but supported by the generous impulse of humanity, he felt no fear. Notwithstanding, therefore, the incumbrance of his clothes, he was enabled to swim to the deep part of the river near the arch; and amidst the cheerings and greetings of the crowd, which had by this time collected on the banks, he caught a firm hold of the poor child, and with a presence of mind, in such a situation truly admirable, brought it towards an accessible part of the river, in a position to preserve its powers of respiration ; and thus soon afterwards had the satisfaction of delivering the boy to his friends, unharmed.

By the recommendation of Mr. Crapp, of this town, a narrative of the circumstances was drawn up, and signed by some of the most respectable inhabitants of Tavistock, who witnessed the intrepidity of Henwood. Mr. Bray, the portreeve, and many others, joined in recommending him to the notice of the Humane Society, and he was sent for by the committee, that he might be present at the next anniversary. Henwood received the silver medal, I believe, from the hand of the Duke of Sussex. On his return we sent for him, when he brought us his medal to look at it; and we were much interested with the modesty of his manners, and the feeling way in which he alluded to the preservation of the poor little boy.

Another remarkable native of our town was the late Major Smith, of the Royal Marine Artillery. He was the son of a barber of this place, before noticed in my former letters, and was brought up to his father's trade. The late Admiral Bedford, however, observing Smith to be a youth of more than ordinary promise, thought he was calculated to do well in a military or naval profession. The Admiral generously befriended him and brought him forward.

In what capacity Mr. Smith first went to sea I do not know; but shortly after he became an officer of marines. In this post he was soon noticed for his activity, courage, and good conduct during the war. He was engaged in many actions; but that by which he chiefly rose to distinction occurred in the year 1801, when he evinced so much promptitude, decision and intrepidity, in quelling a mutiny that broke out on board his Majesty's ship the *Castor*, in the West Indies, that honourable mention was made of his services on that occasion, in the record of the court martial held on the mutineers. Capt. Western, the president, also expressed to him the high sense the court entertained of his conduct on the 13th of December, and of the firmness and steady discipline displayed by the small party of marines under his command. To his spirited exertions, indeed, in the execution of Capt. Fanshaw's orders (under whom he was then lieutenant) the court attributed the quelling this very dangerous mutiny. I wish I was fully acquainted with all the circumstances concerning it, but I am not; though I well remember, after the major's death, hearing

one of his brothers say—that he had rushed on the mutineers at the very moment they had armed, and were about taking possession of the ship, with the intent to put to death the chief officers. Smith's intrepidity (for his men were, in numbers, comparatively nothing to the rebels) overawed them, and they yielded; when, had they not been taken by surprise, and dealt with by a master spirit, they could with ease have over-matched Lieut. Smith and his handful of men. For this truly gallant action he afterwards, so I am told, received the thanks of the House of Commons, and was, most deservedly, promoted to a company.

He married a lady of family, the sister of General Anderson Morshead, the late Governor of Malta. After a long and arduous service abroad, where his health suffered by his exertions in the career of duty, and by a tropical climate, he returned to England, and lived for some years near Portsmouth. He was universally esteemed by a numerous and respectable circle of friends, and greatly beloved in his corps.

I first saw him in the summer of the year 1830. We were sitting in the library, when a servant brought a card with the name of Captain Smith. Mr. Bray had not seen him since he was a boy, (though he had often heard the most honourable mention of him, in a private as well as public capacity) did not immediately recollect who it could be, but desired that he should be shown in. A gentleman about fifty years old entered the room, dressed in plain clothes, but whose military air was not to be mistaken; and never shall I forget the painful feelings he excited, as he sunk into a chair and attempted

to speak to us. The first impression that his appearance made on me, as he sat gasping for breath was that he would die on the spot. We offered assistance, but he waved his hand, and said he should be better in a minute.

From having had, for some years, very bad health myself, I had been addicted to the reading of medical books (a practice I would by no means recommend to my friends), and, singular enough, that very morning I had been engaged in reading an account of certain cases of water on the chest. I felt convinced, from what I saw of Captain Smith's sufferings, that he was the victim of that fatal disorder. As soon as he could speak, he told us, unasked, such was the case. That he had long been very ill; had a mind to try his native air, and visit his aged mother, who still lived in this town. Before he came to Tavistock, he had been at Exeter to see a brother who lived there, where he had consulted an eminent physician. He purposed staying here, he said, about two or three weeks, and then intended going on to Widey Court, near Plymouth, the seat of General Anderson Morshead, and where his lady then resided. There, too, he was to meet his wife, who, in a fortnight, had promised to join him in Devonshire.

After Captain Smith had somewhat recovered his breath, though he still seemed to draw it with great suffering, he entered into conversation with Mr. Bray, and expressed the pleasure he felt in seeing him again in his native town. He spoke of his deceased brother Edward (a brief sketch of whose melancholy career I have before stated) with the greatest feeling, and lamented his early death

and blighted hopes in the most affectionate manner. The conversation turned, also, on other subjects, and we soon remarked the ease and intelligence with which he touched on every topic that arose. We found he was a man who had seen much of the world with an attentive mind, and all his observations displayed that remarkable acuteness which, as well as the tone of his voice, and a peculiarly quick, animated expression of the eye, reminded us so much of his deceased brother Edward.

During the interview, he happened to say that he had always been fond of music. On hearing this I asked him, should he feel himself well enough, to join a little musical party we were to have on the evening of the 23rd of July; and he cheerfully accepted the invitation. He was one of the first who came on that evening; and as he seated himself on the sofa, it struck us that, within a few days, there was an alteration in him much for the worse. He gradually, however, revived, and became more animated than I should have supposed it possible one in such a state of health could have been. We had some young ladies present, who sang very delightfully; they gave us the beautiful Jubilate Hymn; and he remarked to me that he felt every note of that melody; he recollected having heard it abroad. In the course of the evening I showed him the beautiful etchings executed by Mr. Stothard, the historical painter, from his own masterly designs that decorated the shield presented by the merchants of London to the Duke of Wellington. The sight of these engravings, every subject of them depicting some striking event in the

career of the Duke, seemed to call up the spirit which had so long supported him in his arduous profession. I shall never forget the animated manner with which he made his observations, and told me many interesting little circumstances respecting the Peninsular war, with his customary acuteness and clearness of expression,

After this I was obliged to give my attention to the rest of the company, and Mr. Bray took his seat by the side of the captain, with whom he held a long and interesting conversation during the greater part of the evening. I again drew near him, and asked if he found the room too warm, as I felt the heat very oppressive, notwithstanding one of the windows was open. He said he did not, but that he should soon take leave; I must excuse his staying supper. Again and again did he express the pleasure it had afforded him in the long conversation he had held with Mr. Bray. He told me he felt thirsty; and had begged the servant to bring him a glass of cider. It struck me this might be improper for him, and I begged him not to take it, but to let me order him some wine and water. But he said it would not hurt him, and drank it eagerly, though Mr. Bray likewise attempted to persuade him not to touch it. I thought he seemed much worse after drinking this; and, on his rising to go, we so far prevailed with him that he consented to let our servant John walk with him to the inn where he was staying.

There was something in him, notwithstanding his cheerfulness, that persuaded me he was much worse than he had any idea of; and I followed him out of

the room to know if there was anything we could do for him, or if he would not call in medical assistance. He said "No, he was not worse than he had long been," shook me very cordially by the hand, thanked me for feeling an interest in his health, and said that kindness was always a balm to suffering.

I stayed till I saw John lead him out. Little did I think that he was at that moment on the verge of eternity ! and that he would so soon leave the cheerfulness of society, the voice of song to which he had listened with so much delight, for the silence and the solitariness of the tomb. When all the company had left us, we talked of poor Captain Smith ; and on my remarking to Mr. Bray that if he stayed here much longer I feared he might have the melancholy task of officiating at his funeral, we agreed to call on him the next morning, to advise him not to delay his removal to Widey Court, and to send for his wife to meet him there.

After breakfast, on the following day, however, John came suddenly in, and told his master that the landlord of the Bedford Arms had sent to inform him that Captain Smith was no more. That morning the post had brought him a letter, which the waiter, fearing to disturb him, had carried softly into his room, and laid on the table. He did not go near the bed. His bell not being rung at the usual hour and all remaining silent, it excited some uneasiness ; when, on approaching the bed, he was found quite dead ; and by the position in which the body lay, it seemed as if he had attempted to rise, probably finding himself in a state to require immediate assistance.

The letter lying with the seal unbroken on the table was official. It was found to be an announcement to the deceased that, two or three days before, in consideration of his long and meritorious services, he had been promoted to the rank of Major of his regiment. This new honour came but to add to those of his funeral, and he was buried in the churchyard of his native town as Major Smith.

As I purpose devoting this letter to give you some slight sketches of the remarkable characters of this place, (and if I omit any it will be from ignorance not intention, since, as far as I am able, I would wish to do justice to the merits of all,) I cannot pass in silence the mention of one who is still living, now, indeed, in the prime of life, and possessed of so much natural genius, that did but his perseverance keep pace with it, he might rank himself with the first British landscape painters. But, unfortunately, it too frequently happens, unless early and regular study have rendered industry habitual, we find application wanting where it could not fail to produce the most successful results.

Mr. John Hitchins, for that is the name of the subject of this sketch, notwithstanding his want of regular application, may be called a self-made artist, and that in a school entirely his own. When he studies at all, it is from nature; and all his drawings, so produced, are strictly true, and so characteristic, that on looking at them you say immediately,—“These are Devonshire scenes; such are the peculiarities of the rocks, the singular combination of the tors, the wild and picturesque features of the rivers, that render the glens and valleys of the county

so replete with beauty." These are in fact *portraits* of our scenery, and, like other portraits, when treated with a masterly hand, they possess that grace and feeling which constitute the poetry of the art.

Mr. Hitchins is a man possessed of strong powers of mind, and the most accurate taste. In books, or in the fine arts, he has a lively appreciation of what is excellent; and not the smallest beauty in nature, not a cloud, not a combination of form and colour, or the graceful bend of a tree, escapes his observant eye. So much is due to his merits; but the faults of a man endowed with so much genius must not be spared. He will, from mere want of resolution to begin, pass month after month, and never touch a pencil, though he has ample time for his art. Yet, when he once takes that pencil in hand, his application (whilst the fit lasts, and no longer) is of that order which defies difficulties and obstruction. I remember when he once sat on the rocks, near the river in Mary Tavy, drawing incessantly for three days, in the midst of continual rain, and obliged in one hand to hold an umbrella over his head, to finish a sketch he had commenced on the spot; and a beautiful picture it was. He regularly makes a journey to London, once a year, to look at the exhibitions, and returns to his native county the moment he has satisfied his desire. He will walk miles and miles along the banks of a river, to enjoy the scenery, with a fishing rod in his hand, come home, describe what he has seen with enthusiasm, form plans for the pictures he intends making of the most striking scenes in his late excursion, give hopes that at last he is about to do justice to his own capabi-

lities, and then—the lazy fit comes on again, and he does little or nothing to carry into effect the plans thus formed. I hesitate not to write these things of him, having often sketched to him his own character, which he has as often laughingly acknowledged to be true. I can only add that “Pity ’tis, ’tis true.”

One of the peculiarities of Mr. Hitchins is, that he cannot copy, even if he would do so; for whenever he attempts to copy any one of his own drawings, it is always a failure compared to the original sketch. This was the case in the copy he made of his view of Hill bridge for the Duchess of Bedford. It had not the ease and nature of the first effort; and if her Grace should show that drawing to any London artist, he can form, by seeing that alone, no idea of the genius of our Devonshire Ruysdael, as my brother truly named Mr. Hitchins, when he noticed his local sketches in the ‘Gentleman’s Magazine.’

In the hope that the opinion of some of the eminent painters of the day might stimulate our Ruysdael to exertion, I took his drawings to town three or four years ago, and submitted them to Mr. Stothard, and other artists of like authority. Their opinions of his genius, and the fruits it was capable of producing, if cultivated by application, were not less favourable than we had long before entertained concerning him; and I brought home my report with the greatest pleasure. I wish it had produced a more permanent effect in rousing the energies of our townsman, since it is lamentable to witness such an instance of superior natural talents thus unknown and buried by the neglect of their possessor. If

Mr. Hitchins had had the good fortune not to be worth a shilling, necessity would have driven him to application, and Devonshire would have numbered him with her Reynolds and her Prouts, as an honour to the county. But it is not too late to amend ; and I heartily hope he may contradict all I say of him by the most vigorous exertions in time to come.

Mr. Scobel Willesford told me the other day, that we had here two brothers, who deserved to be noticed in these letters, on account of their remarkable genius for mechanics ; the more remarkable, as they were entirely self-instructed in all they did ; all their ingenious inventions being the result of their own unassisted perseverance. Their name is *Robjohns*. And Mr. Willesford tells me they have actually built an organ, which, he assures me, (and he is himself a good musician,) has excited the wonder of every professional person who has touched it. The instrument was entirely their own work, nor had they any knowledge of organ-building, but that which they managed to acquire for themselves, and principally by examining the organ in the church. I wish I knew more about these young men, who, I believe, are not at present resident in the town, though they were born in it.

We have here, too, another clever mechanical head, which has been employed in the invention of some most useful articles of a domestic nature, Mr. Peirce, an ironmonger, amongst many other ingenious contrivances, is the original inventor and sole maker of the most complete roasting apparatus that ever found its place in a kitchen. We constantly use this machine, which is principally formed of tin. It is not at all cumbrous, is complete in

itself, and is about two feet five inches in height, and the same in length. The cook has no trouble but that of putting the meat on the spit and basting it. The spring by which the roast turns is wound up like a watch. All air is excluded, except in front of the fire, and the heat thus confined is reflected by the bright tin plates at the top and on the sides of the machine. I do not know if this invention has yet found its way to London, but if there known, I doubt not it would be very successful.

Having in my former letters * presented you with so full an account of Mary Maria Colling, I do not here give any detailed sketch of her remarkable story, though she certainly claims a prominent place in the biography of Tavistock. She is the same modest, graceful, single-hearted creature that she was before she had the good fortune to be the object of so much kindness and notice both from yourself and other generous friends who felt interested in her little story, and the unassisted efforts she had made to form and cultivate her mind.

Since the publication of her little volume, she has devoted as much time as the duties of her service would admit to her improvement ; and I rejoice to tell those who fancied I might do her an injury instead of a benefit by bringing her forward, that the success of her book (and for one in her station of life it was considerable), and the notice it procured for her from so many honourable quarters, have done

*Annexed to a little volume of "Fables, and other pieces in verse by Mary Maria Colling." Published by Longman and Co., London, in the year 1831. For an interesting account of Mary's volume, see the 92nd number of the 'Quarterly Review,'—March, 1832.

her no harm whatever; but, I trust, much good. There cannot be a more feeling, affectionate, or humble mind, or a more perfectly natural and engaging character. I am proud to call Mary my friend, and I shall never meet with one more constant or deserving.

I remember you wished to know how she taught her canary bird to talk. I have questioned her on the subject; but I conclude the talking canary must have been a genius, as the same pains she took with him she has lately bestowed on the successor of his cage, but without the same success. She tells me that the deceased bird was a great favourite, and she, being much alone, used to have him near her whilst engaged in her work. That she would talk to it, and give it bits of bread, sugar, or cake, which it always took very kindly, and would put its bill between the wires, and seem attentive to her. She generally addressed it with the words "Pretty Dick Canary," or "pretty little dear, give us a bit," &c. One day, after she had thus been fondling it, she left the kitchen, and on her return, whilst engaged in work, she distinctly heard the words—"Pretty little dear." Knowing that no person but herself was in the kitchen, she looked round with astonishment, and the canary again distinctly repeated the same words. She mentioned the circumstance to her worthy master, Mr. Hughes, who said it must be fancy; but he was convinced, by himself hearing the bird speak, that she had stated a fact; and Dick's talents for talking were soon celebrated amongst Mary's acquaintance and friends. So great was her care of the bird after this discovery, that she used to carry it up at night, and hang the cage not very far from

the bed. I have no doubt her care killed the poor canary, for it did not long survive her extreme attention to its comforts. I have somewhere read that the human breath, in a confined atmosphere, will very quickly destroy birds, and Mary's canary may be cited, perhaps, as an example.

To return to herself. After the publication of her volume, as soon as she had received from the subscribers sufficient funds for the purpose, she paid all the expenses incurred in printing, &c. She next erected an inscribed stone in our churchyard to the memory of her beloved grandmother Philp. She made many little presents to "Sister Anne" on her wedding; and, I know, did many other little acts of generosity and bounty that I do not name lest it should be painful to her feelings: all this was done out of the profits of her book; and lastly, as a mark of thankfulness to God, whose goodness she always acknowledges in raising up friends to serve her, she put down her name as a *yearly* subscriber of five shillings to the Church Missionary Society. After all these payments and donations, I believe her own share of what she had gained amounted only to about twenty pounds; since (unless the publishers may have recently received further payments for her) nearly one hundred of her subscribers had not paid for their copies of the work; distance of time and place very probably having made them delay or forget their little debt, which, though very small to each individual, becomes, in the aggregate, a serious loss to her.

So much interest did her work awaken for her, that she has had numerous presents of books, &c.; and one sent anonymously with a very handsome

letter. Mr. Davies Gilbert was so much pleased with her that he endeavoured to trace out her relations in Sussex. His Grace the Duke of Bedford presented her with ten pounds; and a nobleman, who would not even suffer me to let her or any one else know his name in doing the kind act, was so much interested by reading the account of her in the 'Quarterly Review,' that he wrote to me, enclosing for her a five pound note; and the bounty of ten rix dollars, presented by a Danish gentleman, who read her work at Copenhagen, you were kind enough to transmit to her. You were also pleased to express your wish to see a reprint of her little volume. I proposed it to Messrs. Longman and Co., and pointed out to them the probability that a second edition, sold as cheap as the first, or even at a lower price, if they wished it, would be certain to meet with a sale. But from pressure of business, I conclude, and having little time to devote to works on so small a scale, they declined it, though they handsomely admitted the merit of Mary's book, and the very favourable impression it had made wherever it was known. As Messrs. Longman had declined reprinting it, Mr. Hughes did the same; and Mary, with her small fund, could not herself venture upon the undertaking; and so, to this hour, the work has, I know, been frequently inquired for in London, and not a copy can be there procured; Mary had a few, however, reserved here, but even they are nearly exhausted*.

* Should this page meet the eye of a London bookseller, or a publisher elsewhere, who might feel disposed to reprint Mary Colling's little volume, I can only say I should be most happy to superintend the printing, &c., once more, and to add some few things of interest to

I must now for the present take my leave, assuring you how much

I am, my dear Sir,
Ever faithfully and respectfully yours,
ANNA E. BRAY.

the new edition. There would be no expense incurred for engraving the portrait again, as we have the plate in good condition. I have no doubt the reprint would sell; and such is the opinion of Mr. Southey, and of every literary person to whom I have yet spoken on the subject.

LETTER XXXVI.

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQ.

CONTENTS.—Remarks on the charities of Tavistock—Commutations—Ancient charities—Kenelm Digby, author of the ‘Broad Stone of Honour’—His great merit—Charity of a lady to the poor of Tavistock—Hospital of St. George founded and endowed temp. Edward III.—Hospital of the Lazar-house of St. Mary Magdalen and St. Theobald, called the Maudlin—Tolls of fairs, &c., appropriated to the schoolmaster—Annual donation of Robert Charles—St. John’s Chapel—Charles Grill’s charity—Donation to the parish church of St. Eustace and to the chaplain, or common priest—Glebe formerly attached to the living—Ejected minister—Mr. Lewknor, the vicar of Tavistock—Spared in the times of Charles I.—A tenement given for the benefit of the schoolmaster—Oliver Maynard, of Milton Abbot, his charitable bequest to the poor artificers—Serjeant Glanville’s charity—Sir William Courtenay’s bequest to the poor of Tavistock—Watts’s charity, the Gift-houses—Present charities—The Duke of Bedford their munificent patron—Dorcas Society—Lying-inn charity—Library for the poor—The Dispensary Work-house—Clubs; saving banks—School on the Lancasterian plan—The grammar-school much fallen into decay—Benefits of the old English grammar-school—The public library—Buildings erected to receive the books, on the model of the Propylæum—Proposed to be pulled down, on a mistaken principle of taste—Juxtaposition of a variety of architecture admired by artists and architects—Instances given in Venice, Rome, &c., and in Oxford—The Propylæum pulled down—New library—Institution—Lectures—Museum—New librarian in place of the deceased Mr. Knight—Remarkable circumstance respecting the preservation of Mr. Knight, in early life, related—Mr. John Rundle the builder; a remarkable person; born in a humble station; by his own desire brought up a carpenter; his early thirst after knowledge; self-taught; acquires some knowledge of drawing; his great perseverance; goes to Exeter and studies Gothic architecture; thrown from a horse; converts his sick room into a place of study; produces a model of the temple of Theseus

his beautiful drawing and design for a Gothic school-house; his enthusiasm and modesty; his worth and capabilities of becoming an honour to the arts of his country—Subject resumed—Public buildings—New ball-room—Concerts—Miss Elizabeth Greco—Her great talents as a vocalist—No regular theatre—Strolling players—Amusing letter written by the mistress of a strolling company, some years ago, relating her life and adventures—Amusements of a country town—A couple of cheats—French giant—Phantasmagoria—The show-man's proclamation—Beggars—Amusing instance of imposition—An Irish woman and her child—A large snake seen in Pixy Lane—Extravagant reports.

Vicarage, Tavistock, June 8th, 1833.

MY DEAR SIR,

THIS will be a letter of a very miscellaneous character; as I propose, like Espriella, to notice even the least thing that is worthy of observation; though I must not hope, like the ingenious Spaniard, to make old things new by the manner of giving my observations, or, as he does, to throw an interest on the most familiar of our local customs, and to awaken curiosity concerning them as much as if they were those of a foreign or unknown land.

Had Espriella visited this town he would have found subjects for many a letter, and would have told his correspondent that the English charity, he so much commends, was in no place more largely displayed, the size of the town being considered, than in Tavistock. Some of these public examples of charity he would, too, joyfully have traced to their Catholic origin, and would have lamented that others founded in those days when the blessed Mary and the blessed St. Rumon here held sway (and some, also, of later date) were now vanished, no man knows whither; or neglected, or forgotten, or commuted for something else deemed

as good no doubt by those who managed the commutation; and possibly it may be so; nevertheless I hold it to be unfair to the first founders, as they thus have had their original designs, emanating from their own benevolence, changed or perverted; their names, which deserved reverence (and would have had it as long as those charities survived), forgotten; and a doubt still left for cavil or question, if a *quid pro quo* has really and virtually been given in lieu of those ancient charities, and to as good purpose.

In making these observations I can have no personal aim, since I am totally ignorant even of the names of those who managed these commutations; and all arrangements of this description were made so many years ago, that nothing but the fact in its general outline still survives. It is not impossible that the agent named Butcher, the "bashaw," whose character has been handed down to us by Baretti, and is yet the theme of tradition, might have had something to do with the matter; and, if so, I should be still more tempted to doubt the justice or wisdom of the act; for Baretti tells us "that the bashaw (of Tavistock) did right or wrong just as he pleased in this place, and deceived his superiors*."

I shall here speak of the ancient foundations before I come to the modern ones; and certainly no man can do other than agree with Kenelm Digby (that most amiable and least bigoted of all our writers in favour of the Church of Rome), that

* Baretti dates his first letter Aug. 13, 1760; and Lysons says, "In the year 1761 all the parish estates were vested in the Duke of Bedford, for the yearly sum of 120*l.*, excepting certain premises since converted into an alms-house for fifteen poor persons."

the ages of faith were those of charity to the poor, the old, the infirm, and the friendless.

It appears from the manuscript account of the charities of this parish (intrusted to my hands by Mr. Charles Crapp), that the "abstracts" which it contains were "taken out of ye new Feoffm^t Deeds on August 21st, 1738." The document is now before me; but did I copy the whole verbatim it would be tiresome, as the repetitions of law terms with which it abounds are about as amusing as the reading of a title deed or a conveyance at the present time. It will therefore be sufficient to notice them in general terms, excepting in two or three particulars.

The first on the list is that of a Lady Mary somebody (her name begins with a K, but the word is so illegible that I cannot make it out). This Lady Mary in the third year of the reign of James I. gives the yearly rents of certain lands, &c. (at the time of her death being worth 1*l.* 4*s.*) to the poor of the parish of Tavistock for ever. The trustees, &c., are also named; and in the MS. of 1738, beneath the above entry, are the words, in the same handwriting, "Rightly applied." Thus we learn the charity was in existence at that date.

I have before noticed the hospital founded and endowed by one of the ancient house of Tremain, and dedicated to St. George in the reign of Edward III. Of the extinction of that charity I know nothing, nor have I been able to learn any particulars concerning it. In the MS. there is a notice of the hospital or Lazar-house of St. Mary Magdalen and St. Theobald, commonly called the Maudlin. This house survived the destruction of the abbey; and in the twenty-seventh of Elizabeth, John Butte,

then prior, and the brothers and sisters of the same house, with one consent, by deed indented under seal, demised to John Fitz, Esq. and others, in trust, as dispensators of the same for the benefit of the poor lazars, or, wanting such, the poor, all the said lands, tenements, orchards, and parks, for the space of one thousand years. The Maudlin Chapel, of which not even a fragment now exists, was in use so late as the year 1672: this we learn from an entry in the churchwarden's account, which runs thus—"October 20th, 1672, then collected at the Maudlin Chappell, towards the reliefe of John Bazely, blacksmith, inhabitant in the saide towne of Tavis-tocke, the sum of thirty shillings and sixpence *."

After the charity of the Maudlin or Lazars, comes a long entry about tolls, fairs, markets, market-house, court of pypowder, &c., originally granted by letters patent, under the great seal of Edward VI., to the Earl of Bedford in 1551. By which it appears that the "fairs" (tolls of them) were, so late

* St. John's Chapel, as I have before mentioned, was a hermitage on the south side of the Tavy. Amongst the parish documents there is preserved a petition to the then Earl of Bedford (which my brother thinks may be dated about 1677), praying—"That as there is a little cottage much ruyned, with two little garden plots to the same belonging, called by the name of St. John's Chappell, bought in the time of the late contagious sickness, and then converted to a pest-house," that his lordship would be pleased to grant it the parish for ninety-nine years, determinable on three lives thereunder named, reserving to his lordship the ancient rent of one shilling yearly, to be converted "to the use of the poor of the saide parish, unless it should be again required as a pest-house." And this was granted.

St. Margaret's was a small chapelry dependent on the abbey, which Mr. Bray thinks stood near Mount Tavy, and that it was used as a place of worship by the people of the hamlet of Cudlipptown.

as in 1738, "applied to ye schoolmaster, being at ye discretion of ye lessees."

The next entry states that Robert Charles, Esq., of Tavistock, did, by his last will and testament, in the thirteenth year of the reign of Elizabeth, give, in trust, to John Fitz, Esq., John Glanville, Esq., and others, the yearly rents (amounting at the time of the donor's death to 4*l.* per annum) for the relief "of ye poor people within ye two alms-houses adjoining to ye churchyarde of Tavistocke, for ever." This charity, at the date of the MS., was noted as "Rightly applied."

Next follows a long account of certain lands, tenements, reversions, and services, with "ye appurtenances, in ye borough and parish of Tavistocke," given by will of Charles Grills, Esq., in the 17th of Elizabeth, for charitable purposes. Beneath the entry appears this note:—

"N.B. The saide Premises were first vested in Feoffies by Jno. and Charles Grills, of Landrith, in Cornwall, according to a trust reposed in them by Charles Grills their father, by deed dated August 3rd, in ye 12th of King James ye 1st.

"N.B. No uses recited or mentioned."

Next comes the following entry in the MS.:—

"Seizen endorsed July 28th, 1739. Given to the Church of St. Eustace (that is, our parish church) for repairs, but particularly a piece called Parshill Piece, to a Chaplin, or common Priest, for ever."

If any "Chaplin or common Priest" in 1739 received this donation, I do not know; never having heard of the bounty so bestowed before I met with it in this document. Some great changes must have

been made in the church property here; as in the British Museum there is still preserved a register of all the church livings in several of the principal counties of England, made about the year 1645, for the use of the commissioners under an act "for ejecting scandalous and inefficient ministers*." In this register (at so distant a date) we find the living of Tavistock valued at 240*l.* per annum; the Earl of Bedford its patron. The *Glebe* is there mentioned and valued at 7*l.* per annum; and 50*l.* per annum lately added to the incumbent's pension by the Earl of Bedford, which before had been but 19*l.* per annum†. At the present time there is no glebe attached to the living; when it was taken away I do not know; but it was certainly spared in the times of Charles I., as Mr. Lewknor, being then pronounced and returned "a preaching minister," found favour with the Parliament party, and was not disturbed in his vicarage. Possibly his patron, the Earl of Bedford, who was opposed to the royalists; might have been a friend to him at this crisis; since the clergy were so persecuted on the most trivial or groundless charges, that Walker, who drew up his account from authentic documents, gives a statement respecting a loyal member of the Church who was ejected in Devonshire on pretences of so frivolous a nature, that one amongst the other

* From 'Notices of Tavistock and its Abbey,' by A. J. Kempe, in the 'Gent. Mag.'

† The pension, or free gift of his Grace the Duke of Bedford, is now 189*l.*, making it, with 11*l.*, the only sum which the vicar can claim, 200*l.* per annum. The present Duke has lately built a handsome house in which he allows the vicar to live rent-free.

charges brought against him was—that he ate custard pudding in a slovenly and unseemly manner for a minister.

To follow the manuscript :—next comes an account of a tenement given by one of the Fitz family, in the reign of Philip and Mary (under a chief rent of sixpence per ann. to the heirs of Fitz), the rent of which, says the document in question, has been annually received and appropriated to the schoolmaster.

Oliver Maynard, of Milton Abbot, clothier, by his deed on the 10th of January, 1602, “for the zeal and good will which he bore to the well disposed poor artificers, painfull handycraftsmen, labourers, and poor people” of the parish of Tavistock, gives them for *ever* a certain number of tenements (all specified and very minutely described) in Tavistock, one of which is more particularly mentioned, and said to be “situate lying and being within the town, that is to say, between the tenements and lands of the Right Hon. then Earl of Bedford, on the east, and a tenement pertaining to the parish church of Tavistock, wherein Walter Burgess, deceased, then lately dwelt, on the west side of a street called ye Bouch Rowe on the south side, and the street or way leading from the parish church of Tavistock aforesaid, towards Rowden-hill on the north.” Then follows an entry which explains that by the deed of Oliver Maynard, it was not the rents but the tenements themselves he so liberally bequeathed to the use of the poor artificers, &c.

The next charity recorded, is that of Sir John Glanville, to put a “poor, but towardly boy, born of honest parents in Tavistocke, to college.” As

I have already mentioned this in the life of Glanville, I here omit the detail concerning it found in the MS.

The last record (and the document breaks off abruptly, as if not finished, leaving also many blank pages at the close) is that of a grant of certain yearly rents "to be goeing out of Pitscliffe," made on the 14th of May, 29th of Charles II., by Sir William Courtenay, to "ye use of ye poore of Tavistocke *," and this is, I apprehend, the same charity as that called the "Courtenay alms-house" mentioned in the 'Gent. Mag.,' as "one of the ancient and noble family of Courtenay gave 4*l.* per annum, to be divided, by way of pension, among four poor widows in an hospital or almshouse of Tavistock. This building was repaired by George Courtenay, Esq., of Walreddon, at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

I do not here pretend to enter on the subject of the commutations that might have been made for several of these defunct charities, *intended by their founders to last for ever*. Whatever may have been their fate, it is due to the memory of the benefactors that their names should be preserved in connexion with their original grants: here, therefore, (without entering upon the question of what has been done since their day) I record them. Watts's charity (of which more hereafter, as I am promised a copy of his very curious will†) is still in existence; so,

* No doubt this was the Sir William Courtenay, to whom Lady Howard bequeathed Walreddon and Fitz-ford.

† I have not been able, however, to see it,

also, is the almshouse for the poor women, now called the Gift-house, but it is not confined to widows.

I now proceed to mention our present charities, and in doing so I wish it were in my power to give the names of all those benevolent persons who have voluntarily united for their foundation and support. At the head of these stands the Duke of Bedford, who, on all occasions, has been a munificent contributor to the existing charities of this place. We have the Dorcas Society, for giving garments to the poor on the recommendation of a subscriber, the number of garments distributed by each being regulated by the amount of the individual subscription. We have, also, the Lying-in Charity, regulated in the same manner.

We have a library to lend out, gratis, books to the poor. This charity is under the more immediate management of Miss Charlotte Bedford, who conducts it with praiseworthy care and attention. The books circulated are not merely of a religious nature, but likewise of an instructive and amusing class. The Dispensary lately established for relieving the sick was originally suggested by Mr. Charles Crapp: it met with some opposition, but Mr. Crapp never lost sight of his object till he gained support enough to ensure its success; and it has been found of the greatest benefit to the poor. Their feelings are in every way consulted in the regulations of the institution, as they are at liberty to choose their own medical man, who attends them, if necessary, at their own home, and both medicine and attendance are given, gratis, on the recommendation of a sub-

scriber*. The workhouse here, as in most other towns, of late years, has been very full, notwithstanding we have a savings bank, and clubs formed by artificers, labourers, servants, and even by women, to alleviate sickness or any other kind of distress. The subscribers to these clubs pay so much monthly, and receive an allowance according to the circumstances of their misfortunes, whenever they may befall them; and if they die something is likewise allowed to assist in giving the deceased member a decent funeral.

The school here is on the Lancasterian plan; or, as the name of Lancaster is now falling into disrepute, it is called the British Free School. To this my husband is a subscriber; but he, like yourself, is a strong advocate for schools on the plan of your lamented friend Dr. Bell, and is most anxious to see one on that truly wise and admirable system established in Tavistock. Many persons here, and amongst the most respectable classes, are equally desirous on the subject; but unfortunately the Lancasterian plan has been now some years followed, and it is considered that, as yet, the town could not support two schools; nevertheless we are not without hopes of one day seeing the fruits of Dr. Bell's system flourish in Tavistock. My husband's objections to the present plan prevent his taking any active share in the management of it.

It is much to be lamented that the grammar school which, if well encouraged and vigorously conducted, would be of essential benefit to the whole town, has fallen much into decay; but I have always

* Since the above was written, another society for visiting the sick and poor has been instituted.

entertained the hope one day to see it revived. The country grammar school deserves to be held in honour: it is, generally speaking, regulated by ancient and established maxims of prudence and true wisdom: it is content to follow in the old track, and to give to youth that education (founded on religion, the only solid basis of all education) which, in other times, was able to form such characters as our Hookers, our Fullers, our Taylors, and those many illustrious men whose names are engraved, and will for ever endure, on the solid pillar of true English glory. No rank, however humble, is excluded from these venerable institutions; and the "towardly boy," as good Sir John Glanville expressed it, of any honest parents, may receive the benefit (and to such a boy it would become the blessing) of a sound classical education.

The next institution I have to speak of here is not one of charity, but one of universal benefit: it is the public Library, of which the four founders deserve an honourable mention. These are (I copy their names as they stand in the record now before me) the Rev. E. A. Bray, Mr. John Commins, Mr. John Taylor (now resident in London), and the Rev. W. Evans of Park Wood. These gentlemen founded the public library amongst themselves in the year 1799. They soon entertained hopes of widely extending their plan, and the Duke of Bedford became the patron of this most useful institution. Numerous subscribers in a short space gave in their names, and a subscription was next proposed for the erection of a library to contain the books, which had greatly increased in number. A sum of 1000*l.* was, I believe, speedily raised, of

which 1804. was generously given by John Rundle, Esq., the banker *. A beautiful building, on the model of the Propylæum, was erected. This stood near a portion of the abbey buildings; and was not only an elegant object in itself, but, when seen from the hill leading towards Milton, presented so fine a feature both in form and colour, that our friend Mr. Harding, the landscape painter, called it a very gem in the picture; nor was it less admired by architects and many persons of cultivated taste. But this however was not the taste of some of the good people of Tavistock. The Propylæum stood near Gothic buildings; they argued, therefore, that the library ought to be Gothic for the sake of uniformity, quite forgetting (if they ever knew it) that some of the finest cities and towns of Italy, France, and even some in England, are rendered not only more picturesque, but are even admired on account of the juxtaposition of various styles of architecture.

True it is that nothing can be more barbarous than to place Grecian ornaments in a Gothic building; but where the building stands *alone*, and is *entire* and *uniform* in all its parts, how can it be injured by having another building of a different order in its vicinity? The streets of Venice form the most picturesque combinations; yet the buildings of Palladio often stand near those of Gothic date. In Rome the same diversity may be seen; and in France, Brittany, and the Netherlands numberless instances may be observed in their most admired towns: and who would ever wish to pull down the

* The gentleman here named is one of the present members for Tavistock. In all matters of public or private charity, he has been a most liberal benefactor to his native town.

Radcliffe Library at Oxford because it corresponds not with the early Gothic buildings of that most venerable and beautiful city? But this was not such reasoning as made any impression at Tavistock. The Library was not Gothic; and as all the world began to find that, whether they did so or not, they ought to admire the Gothic, the noble Propylæum was voted down at a general meeting, and down it came accordingly. The only good reason that I ever learned for its destruction (a destruction which I heard a very clever architect declare he considered a serious loss to the whole town) was that it was built, like some other modern buildings here, for anything rather than endurance; it was in a cracked and insecure condition. How far this statement might be correct I do not know, but I fully credit it; since there are those who will be obstinate enough to entertain the opinion, that when some of the builders here set to work on any new structure, they calculate how soon they may have to build it up again, as a thing that must happen of necessity. The edifices of the olden time in this neighbourhood, both in the remains of the Abbey and the seats of country gentlemen, ought to make some of these artificers ashamed of their own work.

After the demolition of the Library was accomplished, a portion of the Abbey, above the archway, that once formed the principal entrance, was fitted up by the Duke of Bedford to receive the books, and thither they were removed. The library is still supported by yearly subscriptions, and a librarian receives a regular salary from the sums thus collected. The books proposed are voted in at the general meetings; newspapers and periodicals are

kept on the table of the reading-room, and the subscribers may have any work, during the time allowed for its perusal, at their own houses.

About five years ago an institution was here founded for the purpose of giving lectures on any subjects connected with art, science, or literature—religion and politics being alone excluded, in order to prevent any disputes amongst the members of the society formed for its support. The room in which the lectures are held has been handsomely fitted up in the Gothic style. Mr. Bray has recommended that, as this neighbourhood is so rich in minerals, the society should add to their institution a Museum of native specimens of every kind. These could be easily collected at a small expense; and geological specimens, from Dartmoor and elsewhere, would likewise be useful and appropriate in such a selection. A herbal also might be formed, and this would stimulate young people to the pursuit of botany; since it is universally admitted that no county in England is more fertile than Devonshire in the variety and richness of its plants*.

Some new regulations have lately been introduced at our institutions, and a new librarian appointed in the place of Mr. Knight, recently deceased. I cannot here resist the opportunity afforded of mentioning a very remarkable circumstance connected with Mr. Knight, who was a most respectable man, which was first communicated to me soon after the publication of my letters, addressed to you, about Mary Colling.

* A museum has been commenced since this letter was written; and a Statistical Society is on the point of being established with every prospect of success.

You recollect the story of George Philp, who was lost, together with his young son, in the *Vestal*, off the coast of Newfoundland. Lieut. Edgcumbe* was on board the ship; and Mr. Knight, then a boy, being related to Edgcumbe, was persuaded by him to go to sea in the next voyage he was to make with his captain. Young Knight consented, and set off to join the *Vestal* at Plymouth at the appointed time. A trifling circumstance delayed him on the road, so that on his arrival he found himself too late, for the *Vestal* had weighed anchor, and he caught sight of her, under a favouring gale, far out at sea, making her way rapidly through the waves. To join her proved impossible, for though he made the effort, the boat into which he immediately leaped could not reach the ship; he was therefore obliged to put back. On landing, greatly disappointed in all his plans, young Knight found an old seaman standing alone on the beach, and still attentively observing the diminishing vessel, as she continued her course through the distant waters. "That ship will never return," said the old sailor, "she is overmasted." His prediction was, indeed, fulfilled; for the *Vestal* sunk in one of those sudden squalls so frequently met with on the banks of Newfoundland. Mr. Knight, when he related his narrow escape from joining a crew, every one of which met with a watery grave, acknowledged in the most feeling manner the merciful intervention of Providence in his preservation. He recollected very well seeing poor George Philp and his high-minded wife pass under

* Of the ancient family of Edgcumbe, who, for more than seven hundred years, have held certain lands near Milton Abbot, where the old mansion stands to this day.

the church-bow on the morning of their fatal parting. He remembered the peculiar expression of Mrs. Philp's countenance; not a tear was in her eye, she was perfectly composed, but she looked as if her heart was dead within her. She was, he added, a most remarkable woman: one so resolute or so patient in hard fortune he had never seen.

Mr. Knight died last year, and was interred in Tavistock churchyard. He was universally respected, and, as librarian, was a loss to the town.

In mentioning the remarkable persons of this place, I should be guilty of great injustice did I omit Mr. John Rundle, the builder. This ingenious man was born in a respectable but humble station of life; and on being threatened with an apprenticeship that was not congenial to his feelings, he declared that if his friends persisted, he would run away to sea; but if they would but bring him up as a carpenter, he felt in that business he could work his way to something better. His wishes were granted, and in the craft he had chosen he laboured for many years, and was for some time employed at Dock, now Devonport, in very close service; yet so great was his desire after knowledge, that, even at this period, he would read any book he could possibly get likely to be useful to him; his opportunities, however, were few, but he never neglected his Bible, which he studied incessantly, not only as a religious, but as an historical guide of the highest interest and importance.

His health at length obliged him to quit Dock, and on his return to Tavistock he was employed as one of the carpenters in building Endsleigh Cottage for his Grace the Duke of Bedford. It so chanced

that Mr. Wyatt, who made the design for that cottage, sent down a very clever joiner as a leading man in the management of the carpenters' work, where it required more than common skill. This was a happy circumstance for Mr. Rundle, for he found the joiner was so far master of the art of drawing that he could "plan out" staircase lines, &c. Rundle earnestly solicited that he would instruct him in this art, and very speedily acquired all that his new master had the power to teach him. Delighted with his pursuit, he determined to cultivate his taste; and having now, by good luck, access to more books than formerly, he not only read for improvement whenever he could steal an hour, but he would labour all day as a carpenter, and, after his return home, at six o'clock in the evening, would frequently fag hard at teaching himself to draw till one or two in the morning.

On being sent to Exeter to do some work, he immediately formed the design of making himself master of a practical knowledge of Gothic architecture. Hour after hour would he spend in the Cathedral of that ancient city, till there was not the minutest ornament within its walls but was familiar to him. He afterwards went to London to work in his trade. There he remained but eight months; but whilst on the spot sedulously studied, at every opportunity, the architectural wonders of the great metropolis.

Soon after his return, Mr. Rundle was thrown from a horse, and much hurt. He was confined to his chamber. The confinement was irksome to him at first, but he soon found a way to render it a pleasure instead of a penance, for a mind so active

as his could never rest, and he now determined, without knowing a single rule of the art, to commence modelling. The result was his very clever model of the Temple of Theseus, at Athens. When we saw the model we expressed our surprise, as we well might do, knowing how few had been the opportunities of the ingenious hand that produced it. But if this surprised us, judge of our astonishment when Mr. Rundle produced an architectural design of his own, beautifully drawn by himself (with the ground plan, sections, &c., on the same paper, beneath the elevation of the building), for a public school-house, which I do not scruple to say would have done credit to Sir Geoffrey Wyattville, or Mr. Blore, or any architect of the present day; and to add to all his merits, like every true child of genius, he is so perfectly modest and unassuming that he did not seem at all to fancy there was anything more than common in his performance. He talked of Gothic architecture, and Rome, and Athens, as if the enthusiasm of his whole soul was centred in the works of the mighty dead, and not in his own pretensions.

Mr. Rundle is a married man, the father of three children, and is universally respected. Most heartily do I hope that he may meet with a patron who will have the power to serve him as well as to appreciate his merits; for I am convinced he is one of those men who want but encouragement to become an honour to themselves and to their native country.

To return from this digression to the subject of our public buildings. We have an excellent inn here, the Bedford Arms, already mentioned. It was originally a private house, built by Sanders, formerly

named, and was called the Abbey House. The late Mr. Bray resided there till his death. After that event the house was altered and turned into an inn. The Duke of Bedford is the proprietor of the premises. The old Gothic room, fully described in an early letter, was, about three years ago, taken down, and a very handsome ball-room erected in its stead by the duke. I have been in it but twice: the first time was on a ball night, when from its size, and the comparatively small company assembled, it was dreadfully cold, and I sat shivering all the evening, wishing for the old room; the dancers, however, did not complain. Since then we have had one concert in it, in which there was one good vocal performer, Miss Elizabeth Greco, who sings indeed delightfully, possessing every qualification that nature can give a vocalist—power, sweetness, taste, feeling, and the most brilliant execution. From hearing our Miss Greco, I found the new room was admirably well adapted for music, and nothing could exceed the effect she produced on the feelings of all present when she accompanied her own voice with the simplest air on her harp. In London this lady's talents would acquire for her fortune and success; here they are buried in obscurity.

We have no theatre, the town not being large enough to support such a thing; but now and then a strolling company find their way here, and exhibit in the Market-House. They are always, however, the very humblest and poorest votaries of the sock and buskin, and generally beg their way out of the place. I had once, many years ago, a letter addressed to me by the mistress of a company of this description, requesting assistance, and if I had not

mislaid it I should have been tempted to give it (suppressing the writer's name) at full length, since a more curious and original epistle never yet reached my hands. The writer was an Irishwoman, as she told me in the first line. Her father, she said, had been a clergyman, and left her very young and very poor to make her way in the world; that a love of the fine arts (for she could not put up with a vulgar calling) and a particular love of Shakspeare induced her to go on the stage, and, finally, to collect a company, who used to play in the provincial towns of Ireland, where the strong sympathies of the people for some time rendered her very successful. But she had not always been wise, for she soon married for love, she said, a bit of an Irish boy, who had hardly a rag on him when she took him up for the sake of his genius; but he turned out a plague to her, till one day he died; but trouble did not die with him, for eight or nine children, God bless them, had been the sorrow and the joy of her life; and all that were alive she had brought up to be followers of the stage any way, and they could spout Shakspeare almost as soon as they could talk. But Shakspeare; she truly added, would not fill their bellies; and strolling was a poor trade, for all towns had not taste sufficient for play-going; and often she did not get enough to pay candles for lighting up the house. She was a widow, God help her, and at that time of writing the letter in great distress; and hearing, as she was pleased to say, I had a soul for the fine arts, she thought I should feel for one whose misfortunes came from loving them too well. And so for the sake of all that was generous, and for the love of the church, to which in a way, she added, we

both belonged, she begged a few shillings to help her clear of the town, where, she thought, the good people liked a show of wild beasts at a fair, or an organ grinder in their streets, more than they did the "bard of their land;" for though her own daughter's benefit was "billed" for *Romeo and Juliet*, and got up to show as pretty a Juliet as ever walked the boards, it had not brought more than a few shillings to the house that blessed night, let alone the free tickets sent in to help make up an audience, and nothing the better was she for them.

This, to the best of my recollection, was the sum and substance, and style of the letter. The unfortunate lover of the fine arts did not appeal in vain, and her thanks were expressed as warmly as the favour had been solicited. Poor woman! I pitied her with all my heart, as a day or two after, I saw her from my window, with her family, make her exit from the town in a cart, laden with the stock of the theatre; children, scenes, and all, piled up together, and the poor mother seated on the top, and calling out to Juliet, the biggest girl, who was walking in the mud, by the side of the vehicle, "To keep out of the mire, or her petticoats wouldn't they be as black as night?"

Strolling players are not our only occasional amusement here; we have shows from fairs, and other exhibitions. Wild beasts, as the letter writer observed, are great favourites here when they arrive among us; a troop of riders sometimes appear; and I remember once my pony being dreadfully startled at seeing, for the first time, a dromedary with a monkey on his back, dressed in a red jacket, walk into the town in slow and stately pace. At one time

we had a couple of cheats, who having acquired the arts of eating beef raw, daubing their faces with rose pink and lamp black, oiling their skins, and gibbering like apes, were exhibited as “the extraordinary male and female Esquimaux Indians, in their natural state, just arrived from the North Pole, to be seen, all alive and very tame, for sixpence a head—two-pence more feeding times:—Walk up ladies and gentlemen.” This precious pair of curiosities were, I have since learned, most deservedly committed to Bridewell and hard labour, for six months, as vagabonds and sharpers.

Our last sight was, I think, the French giant, Monsieur Louis, who was nearly eight feet high. I did not see him, being generally very well satisfied with hearing a full and particular account of our wonders. He was, I am informed, a gentlemanly man, and took the air by nights, in order that his exhibition should not suffer, by making himself familiar to the common eye by day. He was very much gratified in being sent for to Endsleigh, to amuse the children of the Duke of Bedford. The French giant was, in fact, the most respectable of all the wonderful persons ever exhibited in this town.

Not long ago we had the Phantasmagoria. A gentleman, sitting at his window, took down the proclamation of this wonder from the mouth of the showman. The following is a copy, verbatim, as he cried it through the streets:—

“Will be shown at the Town Hall, Tavistock, at the hours of seven, eight, and nine, to the nobility and gentry, what is called in the French language phantasmagory, in the English, magic lantern. All sorts of birds, beasts, reptiles, and pantomimes,

'specially the forked lightning seen in many parts of England, but chiefly in the East and West Indies; also what we are and what we is to be; namely, Death as large as any living being—six foot high, with an hour-glass in his hand; and everything instructing and amusing to all ages and societies, both the old and the juvenile. I hope you will all come. If you cannot all come as many as can come; and nobody can say it a'n't worth seeing, except he says it agin his conscience. Boys and girls for the sum of one penny. Their honest working parents for the sum of twopence. Gentlemen and ladies, sixpence each. God save us all!"

As we have occasionally impostors who visit this neighbourhood, so have we many in the character of beggars. I could relate, from my own experience, some tricks played by the latter class with daring success, but I shall content myself with mentioning the two most amusing instances of imposition that I have ever known here. One of these occurred in our own house, and both would have furnished a rich subject for Quevedo in his novel of the Spanish Sharper. The following happened some years ago; I suppress nothing but the name of the party cheated, having been particularly requested so to do, for it is not every one who can make up his mind to figure in the character of a dupe; a character, however, that guileless and single-hearted people are often forced to appear in, by the knavery of the selfish, the cunning, and the designing.

Without then being more particular, I shall merely state, that some years since there was a gentleman in this town, very charitably disposed, who entertained an especial good will and kind feeling towards

old sailors. Any old sailor, by calling at his door, received the donation of a shilling and a glass of grog. It was marvellous to see what a number of veteran blue jackets paid him a visit in the course of a year. At last the servant who opened the door observed that all these sons of the sea had a particular patch on one and the same place of one and the same arm. She began at length to fancy that the old patch must be some badge of honour in the service, and yet she thought it a very odd distinction in his Majesty's navy. She mentioned her observation of the circumstance. It awakened suspicion. The next old blue jacket that appeared, decorated with the order of the patch, was therefore watched and followed to his retreat. He was observed to retire to the house of a certain old woman, not of very good fame, and one who was grievously suspected of the crime here known by the name of *over-looking*; that is, casting an evil or witch's eye on another, to do him an injury, or to bewitch him, or sometimes to drive him mad. To the den of this Sycorax was the son of Neptune thus traced, and in a little while he was seen to come forth again, in his own natural character—that of a street beggar, clothed in rags. The cheat was apparent, and, suffice it to say, that on further examination it appeared that the old woman's house was one of friendly call to all the vagabonds and sharpers who paced the country round; and that amongst other masquerade attire for her friends, she kept by her a sailor's old jacket and trowsers for the purpose of playing off the imposition just detailed. No doubt she was paid for the loan of the dress.

My next story relates to ourselves. On a sum-

mer evening, last year, we were at tea, when one of our servants came in and said, "that a very poor woman, who was in great trouble, had brought a child to be baptized directly; for the infant was so bad with fits that the poor woman was afraid it would die before it could be made a christian."

Up jumped Mr. Bray—"Get a basin of water—where's the prayer book?"

"I will go too," said I, "and see the child; perhaps a little Dalby's Carminative, or something, may do it good"—and away we both went into the hall.

There stood a woman dressed in a large, old, grey cloak, like that of a horse-soldier. An old black bonnet was stuck on one side on her head, beneath which strayed a quantity of long hair, that seemed as if it had never felt a comb. She had a face that was as full and as red as the rising moon; and her eyes, that looked at you out of their corners, had in them the sly expression of low cunning. A rich Irish brogue was as good as any certificate to tell the land of her birth. She made us a curtsy, as she stood crying and talking Irish all in a breath; and under the large cloak she seemed to be alternately cuddling and shaking a bundle, which she said was a child, but the tip of whose nose even could not be seen, and I feared it would be smothered for want of air.

"Is the child very ill?" said I, "It does not cry."

"All the worse for that, my leddy; I'd be having some hope of her, if I could but hear her squeal. But it's no strength she has to cry; and them fits just killing her for forty-eight hours long, and no keeping 'em down—and I starving—starving! not

a morsel of bread, your honour, have I had in my lips since yesterday the morn."—Here she began to cry most bitterly.

"Have you been to the overseer?" said Mr. Bray, "If you are so distressed, he is obliged to give you immediate relief and a night's lodging."

"And is it the overseer, your honour's spaking of? I've been at his door morn and eve, and he's away, and far out, and they tells me he'll not be back till twelve o'clock the night, and that's a dark hour for asking help, and I with the sick babby; and nothing left to sell, or to give to get a lodging, or a crust to keep life and sowl together, and as naked, all but my auld cloak, as a new-born babe. Only see, your honour, and satisfy yourself."—And so saying, she rather unceremoniously threw back part of her cloak (but still kept the child muffled up) and by so doing, obliged Mr. Bray to look another way, for, truth to speak, she was not overburthened with clothes. He put his hand into his pocket and gave her a piece of silver.

"And is it a shilling? may God bless your honour, for copper's the best charity I ever had afore. And now we'll christen the child; and then the leddy there will be giving me an auld garment, that I may go away like a christian mudder from the door."

"What is the child's name to be?" inquired Mr. Bray, opening the book.

"Antonio, your honour."

"Antonio!" said I, "I thought you told us just now the child was a girl."

"Very like, my leddy, for I didn't know what I was saying by raison of my head being turned with

they fits—but a boy it is for sure; and his fader's a Portugee and a sogier; and he's away, over the water, and I and the babby left behind—Hush, hush, hush, my dear little darling.”

“The child is not crying,” said I, “it seems remarkably quiet.”

“I do it to make him still while the minister's over the book, my leddy; for he'll squeal by and by, when the fits take him, with the sprinkle of the water—and may be you'll hear such a squealing as you never heard afore; for sometimes he's all black in the face along wid the disease. But there'll be comfort in seeing him a christian before he goes away dead.”

Mr. Bray commenced the service, the mother still shaking the child, and keeping it closely muffled up in the “auld cloak;” but when it came to that part of the ceremony that the infant must be uncovered to receive the sprinkling—out she brought, in a moment, a fine bouncing child, as rosy as a rose, that could not have been very far from two years old at least, with stout limbs and firm flesh; and the little fellow looked up the very picture of health, smiling and well pleased to undergo the rite of baptism,—a ceremony to which, no doubt, he was pretty well accustomed. That was concluded; and fully convinced that the woman was a cheat, we speedily got rid of her, and though she made a resolute attempt, no “auld garment” did she get from me to pawn at the next town.

A day or two afterwards, we happened to dine at the house of a neighbouring clergyman. There we found that little Antonio had also been baptized in his fits; and it was very confidently believed he had

been carried round the country to as many of the clergy as were likely to be cheated into any sort of compassionate donation.

In speaking of the wonders of this neighbourhood, I quite forgot to mention one, which was here so exaggerated by rumour, that some of the good people at last came to the conclusion that the cause of alarm, a very large snake, was nothing less formidable in bulk than the great boa itself.

I think it was in the summer of 1828 that an application was made to a magistrate to issue an order, for the security of the neighbourhood, that a certain monstrous snake, first seen in Pixy Lane, and afterwards in our orchard, should be well looked after. If the magistrate was to issue this order to apprehend the snake, or to secure the attention of the constables, the applicants themselves did not very clearly define. I never heard such a story as speedily found its way amongst the lovers of the marvellous. No doubt, however, the snake that had been seen was an extraordinary one; and, as a matter of curiosity, I set to work to learn the most *credible* account of it that could be met with. One boy offered to take his "bible oath" that he was leading up (*i. e.* walking up) Pisgey Lane with another lad, and on going to the hedge to pick something, a great snake leapt out, over the little boy's shoulder, as he was standing beneath; crossed the road with great rapidity, and an old man who was near the spot, declared that the body of the *long cripple* (for so they here call a snake) was as thick as his thigh; and so long, that he would not say how long it could be.

I also heard an old woman, considered here a wise

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one, declare, "the reptile was for all the world just such another snake as tempted Eve to eat the apple." In our orchard, however, it produced a very different effect; for the formidable monster, luckily for us, having been there last seen, proved as good a guard as any dragon to the fruits there found, so that we had fewer apples stolen that year than we ever had before. What became of the snake no one could tell; but not in the days of monkish superstition could more extravagant tales respecting a reptile have been circulated or believed. On hearing these, I no longer wondered at the credulity of the old chronicler, who recorded that marvellous story about the monstrous snake at Rouen in Normandy, which swallowed knights whole, armour, horse and all, and at last required a saint himself to kill it.

LETTER XXXVII.

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQ.

CONTENTS.—Old survey of the town in 1726—A few brief items extracted, which any reader may pass over if he feels no interest in them—Little herb-garden given to the schoolmaster, &c.—Tavistock a borough town—Court Leet and Court Baron—Court of Record—Manor of Tavistock—Burgesses—Markets—Ancient Guildhall; still the court of justice—Remarkable feud between the towns of Tavistock and Oakhampton—Death of Carter Foote—Healthy state of the town—Longevity of the people—Rejoicing on the passing the Reform Bill—Procession—Population—Yearly deaths—The doctors—The country doctor; his useful and laborious calling—The plague of 1626—Assizes removed from Exeter to Tavistock in 1591 on account of the plague—An extraordinary instance of disease, believed to be the plague, in modern times—The cholera first appeared here in 1832; melancholy instance of its fatal effects—Humble life; examples of the most patient suffering frequently found in it—Accidents in mines—Affecting story of a widow and her son—A remarkable instance of patient submission to the will of God in continued and severe affliction, seen in a poor widow well known to the writer—The widow's tale.

Vicarage, Tavistock, June 21st, 1833.

MY DEAR SIR,

I HAVE this morning been looking over some notes made from "a survey and valuation of the site of the Abbey of Tavistock, together with the demesnes and manor of Hurdwick, in the county of Devon, belonging to the most noble Wriothesley, Duke of Bedford," taken by Humphrey Smith in 1726.

I find in this *few* particulars of any import which I have not already noticed, excepting some *brief items*

that ought not to be omitted, as they form a portion of the history of the town, in its minor details.

William, the first Duke of Bedford, built a house for the schoolmaster, and gave him a "little herb-garden," rent free. Adjoining the same, and then situated within the churchyard, was the school-house belonging to the town; which John Earl of Bedford, by his deed poll, dated the 6th of Edw. VI., granted for two hundred years, with tolls and profits of three fairs, with a court of pypowder, and a weekly market on Fridays, as benefactions.

Since which the town has built, at its own cost, a market-house, where the cross formerly stood. "All which profits and liberties," says the survey, "are within the borough of Tavistock, and for the use of the schoolmaster, and may be worth comm^{bs} annis 22l., which lease expires Anno Dom., 1753.

"Tavistock," continues this document, "is a borough by prescription, and of great antiquity. It consists of a portreeve and about one hundred and ten freeholders *. The Duke of Bedford's steward holds a court leet and court baron twice a-year; viz. Michaelmas and Lady-day.

"At the first court, the jury returns four persons, out of which the steward nominates one for portreeve, and swears him in for the year. The members of Parliament are elected by the majority of the freeholders, and returned by the portreeve. The weekly market on Fridays is considerable. Five fairs are

* This was in 1726. The following statement I have been favoured with from our present Portreeve:—Number of voters (resident) before the passing the Reform Bill, 31; ditto minors, 2; non-resident freeholders, and thereby disqualified before the passing the bill, but admitted by it, 8; non-resident, living at a greater distance than seven miles, 9. Number of votes under the Reform Act, 246.

held during the year, viz., St. Mark's, 23rd of April, and two days following; St. Andrew's, 28th of November, and three days following; St. John's, 29th of August, the eve, and two days following; twelfth fair, 6th of January, and the day following.

"This borough is governed (1726) by eight masters, the Duke of Bedford's steward at the head of them. There are lands belonging to the same, worth 60*l.* per annum, which these masters appropriate mostly to the repairs of the church. They have a magistratical power of committing offenders. The lord (continues the old survey) has a gaol in this his borough, and two serjeants at mace; one of which is keeper of the prison, and has a house to live in rent free, and a salary for attending the sessions and assizes. The lord has also a Hundred called Hurdwick; also Tavistock Hundred, with a Court of Pleas held every three weeks, power of granting replevins, breaking open with and returns thereof. There is likewise a weekly Court of Record held every Tuesday, at the Guildhall of the said borough.

"The manor of Tavistock was most likely held by Orgar, who kept his court here till the Abbey was erected; for we find by a charter of King Henry I., recited by Inspeximus, in a charter of confirmation made 21st of Edward III., that the king granted to the Abbey the Jurisdiction and Hundred of Tavistock, with market, fairs, &c., with the view of frank-pledge, gallows, pillory, assize of bread and beer, &c. All which privileges were challenged by the abbot in the reign of Edward I., and enjoyed by his successors till the dissolution of monasteries in 1539.

"The portreeve has possessed the privilege of

being returning officer of the burghess elected to serve in Parliament ; for we find they made three returns in King Edward I., and King Edward II.'s reign ; and have constantly sent their representatives ever since the beginning of King Edward III.'s time. The list of the burghesses who have served in Parliament for this borough, begins the 23rd of Edward I. ; but is continued for no more than two other elections, till the beginning of King Edward III.'s reign, whence it is carried on entire (except in the four reigns before mentioned, when the rolls are lost) to the 12th of her late Majesty Queen Anne. The members of Parliament for this corporation now serving, in 1726, are

“ Sir John Cope, jun., Bart.

“ Francis Henry Drake, Esq.”

That this town was formerly of far greater note than at the present time cannot be doubted ; the various historical records of its importance heretofore mentioned are sufficient proof of the fact. Tavistock is still considered to possess one of the finest markets in the West of England for corn ; and the woollen manufacture is still carried on ; but not with that success, nor with that superiority in the article produced when the “ Tavistock kersey ” sold in London was sure to procure the highest prices, and to be held unrivalled in the excellence of its manufacture. Indeed only the most common serges are now made here. And as to the market, though abundant in poultry and butter, it is by no means a cheap one ; and is more famous for tough, lean, and miserable beef, and hard mutton, than for anything else that I have ever been able to discover. Let

me, however, do justice to the pigs; since to them we owe bacon and hams equal to any produced from the Hampshire hogs. Our market is very large and crowded every Friday throughout the year. There is a smaller market on Fridays.

The Guildhall, mentioned in the survey above quoted, is still the court of justice. There Mr. Bray has performed the duties of a magistrate for nearly twenty years; but, considering himself entitled to the privilege of superannuation, he is now relieved by some gentlemen in the neighbourhood, and seldom makes his appearance in the hall. There is a good deal of business here for the magistrates, and formerly there must have been even more, since Mr. Bray's father could recollect barristers pleading in the Guildhall of Tavistock as in a court of assize.

Amongst other remarkable circumstances respecting this town, one is the extraordinary feud, still the theme of tradition, which for years existed between the Tavistock and the Oakhampton people. How this feud commenced I do not know; if it is to be traced back to the times when some Norman Baron was lord of the latter place, and lived with his retainers perched on the top of a high hill in the strong castle there situated, of which nothing but a heap of picturesque ruins now remains; if the monks of our abbey had any share in this quarrel; if they excommunicated the baron, or armed their yeomanry and tenantry against him, are all matters for amusing conjecture, and will do, as well as any other cause, to fancy as the beginning of so lasting and deadly a feud between two neighbouring towns; or possibly the wars of the red and white roses (and hot wars

were they in the West) might have occasioned it; or even a less matter;—rivalry in trade, or, in more modern times, rivalry of whig and tory principles; since, with some individual exceptions, Tavistock is noted for espousing the former, and Oakhampton the latter in politics. Let the cause of hatred, however, be what it may, certain it is the two towns have hated each other with hearty good will from generation to generation; and, as one proof of the fact, take the following story, for the truth of which I have many respectable living authorities.

There was some years ago a character of this borough, in humble life, whose name was Carter Foote. On returning from Oakhampton, whither he had journeyed on business, he remounted his horse, after having enjoyed himself at the public-house, and attempted to pass the river below the bridge, by fording it over. The day had been stormy, and one of those sudden swells of the river (that sometimes happen in hilly countries where the currents rush rapidly from the moors) taking place, he found himself in extreme danger. After long endeavouring to struggle with the current, he leapt from his horse upon a large portion of rock, which still kept its head above water; and there the unfortunate man stood calling aloud for help, though his cries were scarcely audible, from the roaring of the wind and the water.

Some person going by ran and procured a rope, which he endeavoured to throw towards the rock; but finding it impossible to do so without further assistance, he begged two men, belonging to Oakhampton, who drew near the spot, to give him help and save the stranger, whose life was in so much

peril. One of them, however, very leisurely looked at the sufferer, and only saying "'Tis a Tav'stock man, let un go," walked off with his companion, and poor Carter Foote was drowned.

Our town is considered, and justly so, remarkably healthy; it has abundance of water, and the wind which sweeps across the valley, affords a constant change of air, whilst the river is rapid, and there are no stagnant pools. The parish register proves that the inhabitants live to be very old; many die beyond eighty, some beyond ninety. On looking over that record yesterday, I saw an entry of the burial of Elizabeth Gendal, who died very lately at the age of one hundred and two. Last year this poor woman with another, whose name is Jones, and who is nearly one hundred years old, sat together at tea, in the open streets, when there was a grand rejoicing for the passing of the Reform Bill; an event which was here celebrated by feasting and a procession.

I saw very little of these rejoicings, for I was at the time a great invalid; but I received full accounts of them from both parties; and the procession which passed our door was, I had been previously informed, *classically* got up. Now what the classics of Tavistock might be (if this were correct information) would puzzle a scholar or an antiquary to determine. St. George figured in the procession, dressed like one of Mr. Astley's riders. Moses walked carrying a wooden table of the ten commandments; what part he had to play in the rejoicings I do not know. Joseph, too, was there, in his coat of many colours; Bishop Blaze likewise joined the company in a woollen wig; and Jason appeared bearing the golden fleece, and dressed in a

cocked hat. Such was our *classical* Tavistock procession in honour of reform ! To me the most gratifying circumstance of the day was to see the old and the poor eating a good dinner which cost them nothing.

I mentioned just now that Tavistock was a healthy place ; but I did not therefore mean to say that the people never fell sick, or never died in it. For however good the air may be, or however great our advantages, sickness and death will come in various shapes among us, to claim their dues of poor mortality here the same as every where else. Yet considering that, according to the last census, we have in this parish a population of 5602, about one hundred deaths yearly are not many. If the doctors could keep off sickness, we have here no lack of them ; and as they have one and all tendered their services with no other reward than the good deed will afford them, to administer their help to the poor, when the Dispensary in this town was lately established, they deserve a most honourable mention, and that I feel a pleasure in giving them. Indeed a country doctor, the most laborious, the least known, beyond his own immediate sphere, and the greatest slave of the public, is one of its most useful and meritorious servants. His life is harder than that of a miner ; for though the miner may toil all day, he may sleep in his bed at night ; but the country doctor, in hail, rain, snow, or storm, must turn out of a warm bed and ride, often to the dreary waste of Dartmoor, through rough roads and darkness, at the call of humanity, and frequently has, as his reward, to contend with the prejudices of obstinacy and ignorance, or is supplanted at last, as I have known instances,

by some old woman called in to charm the patient, as a more infallible mode of cure than all the learned experience of the faculty : whilst, if he deviates, in desperate cases, from the most ordinary practice, or wishes to open the body after death, he is looked upon as a monster and a brute, having no touch of human feeling in his nature. He is called in to give assistance in moments of suffering, fear, and doubt, when if his patient places confidence in his skill, he comes to him as an angel of hope ; and is trusted as an oracle, or as if he could set at defiance the course of mortality ; but let the patient be cured, and the country doctor no longer wanted, let his bill be delivered, and then comes the murmuring, and the medicine is considered and calculated by the shop-selling price ; whilst the doctor's time, his education, his long season of study in the hospitals and the dissecting-room, his broken sleep, his night rides, his wear and tear of constitution, and his anxiety of mind, go for nothing in the account ; and however great may have been his services, or inadequate their reward, he too often finds it difficult to convince his discontented patient that a thankless mind is in the worst state of moral disease.

By inquiring amongst our medical men here (and more particularly of our own esteemed and skilful surgeon) I find that disorders of an inflammatory nature are most common in this town and neighbourhood. Inflammations of the lungs, typhus fever, rheumatism, and that deadly foe to children, the croup, sometimes occur. There is, too, in Devonshire, a dangerous cholic, probably the consequence of drinking cider when heated with exercise.

I have before mentioned the ravages the plague made in this place in the year 1626, when the mar-

ket was held amongst the druidical circles on Dartmoor. We have still a tradition current here, that during the time the pestilence raged the town was so deserted, that the grass grew between the stones in the streets. It is also said that a very malignant fever visited Tavistock about a century ago, when the market was again removed to Hurdwick. In the year 1591, whilst the plague swept off the inhabitants of Exeter in such awful numbers, the summer assizes of that city were removed to our town; and thirteen persons, convicted of capital crimes, were executed on the Abbey green.

A medical man here, not long since, related to me a most curious instance of disease, which occurred in the lifetime of his father, who was also a professional gentleman. The case in question he confidently believed to have been a real instance of the plague. The circumstances alluded to occurred many years ago; they were as follows:—

A young man of Tavistock, named Strong, purchased a second-hand great coat at Plymouth; the coat came from abroad, and had been taken from a vessel just come into the harbour. If that vessel had previously performed quarantine or not I could not learn. Three or four days after Strong had worn the coat, he became ill, and complained of great pain in the arm. This increased, inflammation appeared in the limb, and he suffered from violent fever: at first it was entirely of an inflammatory character, but rapidly assumed that of typhus. Suppuration also took place in the arm, which soon became gangrenous; and on the fourth or fifth day he died. His father and another son were *very soon* taken ill in the same way, and also died. What part of the body was more particularly affected in these

persons the medical gentleman who related the case to me did not know ; but he believes the disease was exactly of the same character as in the first victim, differing only in progress, being far more rapid in its changes and in death. Two men attended the funerals of these unfortunate persons, both of them were seized with the fatal contagion ; one died, but the other, whose arm was also in a state of suppuration, was with extreme difficulty saved. These repeated instances proved, beyond a doubt, the contagious nature of the disease, whatever it might have been. The clothing, &c. belonging to the dead were destroyed, and no other cases occurred ; little doubt was entertained but that the plague had been communicated to the first victim by the coat purchased from the vessel ; it is not improbable it might have belonged to some one who died abroad of the pestilence.

The cholera first appeared in Tavistock on the 16th of July, in the year 1832, when a poor woman, who had come over from Plymouth to sell baskets at Lamerton fair, was suddenly taken so ill there, that she was placed in a cart and brought to this town, to the door of Mr. Harness, a surgeon of great skill, and of no less humanity. Her husband, and a child at the breast, were with her. The woman was removed to the poor-house in so dangerous a state, that most of the medical men who saw her pronounced she would not be living by twelve o'clock that night. To the honour of Mr. Harness be it spoken, he paid her the most unremitting attention ; and God so far blessed the strenuous means he adopted, that she survived the shock. On the 21st, however, she appeared in such extreme danger, in consequence

of the child not having been allowed to relieve her in the manner nature points out, that in order to save her, and in the hope that the disorder would not be conveyed by the milk, as the worst symptoms of cholera had ceased, the baby was put to the breast. But alas ! that which was designed to sustain life, became to the poor child a speedy and deadly poison. I will not dwell on the detail of circumstances so painful to every feeling mind. After sufferings the most terrific, the infant died of the pestilence in about twenty-four hours after it had first been seized. According to the order of council this innocent victim was interred, not in the churchyard, but in a spot chosen for a cholera burial ground, on the side of a hill near the town. It is a quiet and a pleasing spot ; there repose the earthly remains of the poor child. Two other persons, who died of the same disease, were likewise there interred. In record of the melancholy event above detailed, Mr. Bray has written the following distich by way of epitaph :—

- “ Unconscious martyr ! from a mother’s breast,
 • Thy death, her life, was drain’d :—and now thou’rt blest.”

On the day after the funeral I rode up the hill, and stopped to look upon the infant’s grave. It was a sunny and delightful evening, and as I drew near a bird rose fluttering and singing from the new-heaped mound of earth. This little circumstance brought to my mind those beautiful lines on the burial of Madelon, and I could not but feel their truth.

“ A lark sprung up aloft,
 And soar’d amid the sunshine carolling,
 So full of joy, that to the mourner’s ear
 More mournfully than dirge or passing bell
 His joyful carol came.”

I have in these letters more than once followed your advice in collecting such short and simple annals of the poor as I could here find of any interest.

In collecting these how often have I thought that in humble life, especially in the country, how much, in the most aggravated trials of sickness, poverty, and suffering, there may be found of patience, of a quiet submission to the Divine will, that if witnessed in those known to the world would be celebrated as heroic examples of piety and virtue, "Few," says an eminent French writer, "can discover superior merit, either of talent or of virtue, unless it is pointed out to them by some one who possesses the power as well as the will to bring it into notice; but all will pay to both the most striking homage when consecrated by the voice of public fame."

This is true; and as examples of private worth are not less useful than those of the most public character, even when found amongst the poorest of the poor, it is a pleasing as well as a desirable task to give them a record; notwithstanding that record may itself become neglected: some solitary eye may glance on it, some heart which repines in secret under similar trials and difficulties may be touched and encouraged by seeing how much of consolation, of comfort, may be found in bearing with a christian's hope, and a christian's resignation, those strokes of fortune that are, more or less, the lot of all, though it is true many seem to have more than their share of "the ills that flesh is heir to."

In this neighbourhood accidents frequently occur in the mines: some are of a nature too appalling for repetition. One which I cannot even now recol-

lect without shuddering, will find its way to every heart, so deeply was the sufferer an object of general commiseration.

There is in this town a poor widow, who has several children, and earns her bread as a chare-woman, or in other daily labours. Her eldest son I well remember; he was a fair-headed, fresh-coloured youth, of a pleasing countenance; very fond of his mother, quiet and harmless, but considered rather weak in his intellects; and perhaps on this account he was her favourite child. The widow had taken great pains to rear him, and was so tender over him, that when I saw her with the poor lad, I used to think of a line by the unfortunate Neale,—

“The bird that we nurse is the bird that we love.”

She was very poor, and at last succeeded in getting some work for her son in the mines that he was equal to undertaking. I saw him with her not long after, when she one day brought him to our house, in the pride of her heart, to tell me that her “dear boy was like a man now, for he could honestly get his own bread,” and she repeated with a mother’s fondness the proofs of his good conduct, his attention to work, how regular he was in his hours of returning home to her, and that not a penny was idly spent; “She blessed God for him as a comfort to her, and the bits of children she had to bring up.”

For some time I saw no more of her, till one day I was in the kitchen giving some orders to the servants. The door was open—in rushed the poor widow, without any previous intimation of her being near the house—she threw herself into an old oak

chair that stood by the fire, clasped her hands together, and with a countenance livid as death, and wild in its expression, exclaimed, in a frantic manner, "He is killed, killed, my boy, my poor son! God have mercy on me, I have lived to see him brought home a corpse—my boy, my dear boy!"

Shocked at the intelligence, and alarmed for the poor mother, I stood for a moment unable to speak to her. When I did so, and endeavoured to learn some connected account, for all attempts to soothe her feelings must have been ineffectual at such a moment, she was in so distracted a state that she scarcely seemed to know me, and I could learn nothing more than that the lad was killed in the mines, and had been brought home a corpse to her door. It appeared, however, as I afterwards heard, that her son had quitted her that morning to go to his work: he parted from her with a kiss, and said, "Mother, God bless you." I could not repeat the horrid particulars of the accident by which he met his death: he was entangled in one of the wheels of the machinery in the mine; need more be said to intimate his dreadful fate? Happily he did not linger; he was instantly disengaged by the exertion of his fellow-labourers, but he was quite dead; and without giving his poor mother any notice, they carried home the body to her door. This, for the time, maddened her, as it well might do, and for some hours she was unconscious of every thing but the deep and overpowering calamity that had deprived her of her darling son. She had, I was told, seen the body laid out as if she did not see it, and then watched it with an eagerness that

seemed as if she looked for some slight sign of returning life.

Another incident connected with her melancholy tale must not remain unnoticed. The poor, the very poor, deeply as they feel, have not leisure to give their days exclusively to grief. The widow had other children, and for them she was obliged to do many little things even whilst the poor lad lay a corpse. If what I now have to mention occurred on the day of, or before, the funeral, I cannot tell, but I rather think the former; and though I have often seen her since, I never could be so unfeeling as to ask her any questions connected with that dreadful event.

She came again to our house after the accident; her manner was less frantic, but her expressions of sorrow were still wild and energetic. She was in tears; and she sobbed so much at first that she could scarcely tell me what new grief had added fresh bitterness to her heart-rending loss. "Something," she said, "had hurt her so—she could not have believed it possible that any body could have been so wicked, so cruel to one like her; a widow woman with her small children, and her dear boy just killed; it was cruel—it was so unfeeling." It was, indeed; for the poor creature told me that she had "washed out her own apron and her little children's frocks, that they might all be decent, and have on them a bit of black riband for poor" — she stopped, for she could not speak his name, her sobs would not let her. She continued—"For *his* funeral; and she hung them near her door, and somebody had stolen part of them, and carried them off;

and at such a time it was so cruel: it was a wicked, a miserable world; well might the clergyman thank the Lord, as he stood over the grave, for those he took out of it to himself."

I do not know if the mingled expression of her grief for the loss of her son, and her sense of such a want of human feeling in the person, whoever he might be, that had done her the little injury she sustained at such an hour, was not even more painful to witness than her first frantic burst of sorrow. In the former there was something appalling; but in the latter there was the expression of a mind broken down with misery, and even morbidly alive to the least thing that could add but a feather's weight to that affliction. The circumstances above related, connected with the melancholy death of her son, made an impression on me that I shall feel and remember as long as life endures.

There is another poor widow here who comes indeed every week to assist the servants in our house; and who, for the patience with which she endured the trials of many years, and her most honest character, deserves mention. She is more than seventy: her name is Jenny Dobson: a more single-hearted creature never lived. Her countenance, always placid, possesses such a marked character of honesty and benevolence, that it would excite a feeling of interest for her, even with a stranger. Poor Jenny's life was, for years, one of trials and calamities. Her husband was sickly; and in him she had to bear with the frequent consequences of long-continued sickness—a peevish temper. She had many children, and owing to his ailing state the burthen of bringing them up fell

chiefly on herself. Her second son, a good young man, married and became the father of a family: he was taken from them by a dreadful fate. He was killed by a fall of the earth from a sand-pit where he was at work, and was literally crushed to pieces.

Her eldest son, a labourer, after working in a turnip-field, loaded the cart he had been driving. Unfortunately he twisted the halter, by which he was to lead the horse home, round his arm. The animal took fright, and set off at full gallop. In vain did he endeavour to disentangle his arm; the unhappy young man was dragged across two fields, and so dreadfully was he injured, that instant death would have been a mercy: he lingered, however, from the Friday till the Monday, when he expired.

Another of Jenny's sons, whose sufferings and whose patience under them, all, who knew him here, well remember, was the victim of a fatal accident. He received a kick in the forehead from a horse: it turned to a cancer; and for nine years, such was the natural strength of his constitution, he lingered in the utmost misery. During this time his wife (for he had married early in life, and was the father of several children) and his mother nursed him with the greatest tenderness and care; and the wife, by her incessant labour in weaving serges, and with the help of individual charities, maintained them all with a decency and neatness that deserved the highest commendation. Distress and her sick husband were never pleaded as an excuse for the slightest neglect; and I am told by her mother-in-law that she would work cheerfully even in those hours when she really wanted rest from her incessant labour. At length, worn out by suffering,

the poor husband's constitution broke up altogether; and in a few months after he died of dropsy on the chest.

This morning, that I might make no mistakes in relating these melancholy particulars, our poor old Jenny answered a few questions I put to her; and before she quitted me, told me all the sad sufferings of her whole life. She said, "She could scarcely tell when her troubles first began; for she married very young, and her husband was but a labourer in the fields, and she had soon more children than she could find food to give them. And often had she been obliged to dine off the most common barley bread, and she used to run home from her own daily work and give the little things a meal of potatoes, and what struggles were hers to get them clothes enough to put on their backs!"

The latter days of poor Jenny's life promise more fairly for her comfort than the early or the middle part of it. In talking over her troubles with me this morning, though she very seldom says a word about them, she declared that God had supported her through them wonderfully. What her feeling of her trials had been God alone could know; but in them all she had never lost sight of Him, and that her prayer had been, in the worst of them, that He would give her strength to bear her burthen; and so he had, or how could she have suffered so, and yet been able to maintain herself and her family? And in the midst of all, there was one blessing he had never kept from her, and that was a mind contented with whatever he pleased to give her, and to do any labour.

How many talk of resignation, but how few practise it like this poor creature*!

Adieu, my dear Sir, and believe me ever, with respectful esteem,

Most truly and faithfully yours,

ANNA E. BRAY.

* The poor woman, whose remarkable afflictions have here been noticed, died a few months since, after a lingering and most painful illness. She was resigned to death, and strong in the hope of a Christian. She was interred in Tavistock churchyard.

LETTER XXXVIII.

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQ.

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CONTENTS.—The writer states the claims of one near and dear to her, to hold a place in the Biography of Tavistock—Proposes to give not a regular life, but a sketch that may be amusing, and of some interest, she hopes, concerning him—Born in Tavistock—His father of the legal profession—His mother determines her son shall be named after Sir Edward Atkyns—Some account of the Atkynses, father and sons—Celebrated men in their day—Buried in Westminster Abbey—Christening of little Edward Atkyns—His godfathers—Eccentric characters—Anecdote of a presentation to Marie Antoinette—A sketch of the Brigadier—Anecdotes of childhood—Early talent for drawing—Edward's inclination for the church—Difficulty about his going to school—His mother will not let him go to Eton—An anecdote respecting an old fashion in dressing the head—The boy fond of a book—Shy and bashful—More anecdotes about early days—The lad discovers a taste for poetry—Mr. Tasker, the physiognomist, prophesies about him on observing his countenance at their first meeting—Edward's godfather, Mr. Tremaine, gives a friend a living to hold for his godson, till he might be old enough to take it—His father's determination to make him a lawyer prevents his benefiting by it—Edward is at last sent to school to Moreton Hamstead—Some account of the rector and his curate—The curate's system of education—Lord Chesterfield much studied at Moreton—The origin of the familiar expression of *Soce*, used by the Moreton cooks—Baldwin Fulford—A descendant of the ancient family of Fulford—A traditionary story of Richard I. in the Holy Land—Story of a knight and lady—Little Edward goes to Fulford—Melancholy circumstance relating to Sir John Collyton when a child—William Dacres Adam, another schoolfellow—Oddities amongst the characters of Moreton—The doctor a votary of Hoyle and Galen—Red Post Fynes and the punchbowl tree—Little Edward's shyness not cured—His natural disposition renders him unfit for a lawyer—Mr. Cake, his master, re-

moves to Alphinton—Remarkable character of the master of the rival school—His history—The late Lord Gifford one of his pupils—Halloran's fate—Edward emancipated from school—Publishes a volume of poems in his eighteenth year—Commended by the critics—Park, in his edition of 'Ritson's Selection of Songs,' gives the only two in this volume—Edward forms a plan to write a history of his native town—Collects notes for it—Begins his excursions—He pursues also drawing and music—Composes several original melodies—Studies the modern languages—Becomes well versed in Italian literature—Forms an intimacy with some of the French officers, prisoners on parole—His admiration of Gesner induces him to attempt a series of English Idyls—The first part of these published in 1800—Edward becomes Captain-Lieutenant in the corps of the Royal Devon Miners—The king signs his commission—Edward has the honour to meet the Duke of Clarence, the present king, at a party in London—The Royal Devon Miners turned into an artillery corps—Edward their captain commandant—Anecdote of Doctor Hunt—In 1801 Edward removes to London; enters as a student at the Middle Temple—At his leisure follows his pursuits—Writes poetry in Italian—Studies the works of Bacon—Becomes acquainted with Dr. Shaw and several eminent persons—With Edwards the bookseller—with Matthias; an intimacy follows—Meets Sheridan and many celebrated persons at the house of Richardson the member—Has an interview with Walking Stuart—The philosopher's person, opinions, &c.—Browne, the traveller—Lady Hamilton—Anecdotes of Horne Tooke—Friends in London; fashionable society—Edward's studies, pursuits, and amusements—His *Vers de Société*—Selections from them given—Various pieces in verse—Sir Sydney Smith—Anecdotes of himself whilst a prisoner in the Temple at Paris—Edward goes the circuit for five years—Dislikes the law as a profession—His acquaintance with Sir Charles Mannors Sutton—Anecdotes of Edward related by his bar friends—Three cases—His inclinations turned on the Church—Attends the lectures of Dr. Porteus—Studies the old divines—Becomes confirmed in his resolution to enter the Church—Meets Mr. Mathias and communicates his plan—Circumstances attending his ordination—Goes to Tavistock—The Duke of Bedford makes him Vicar of that town—Keeps a journal of his excursions in the neighbourhood—When Rural Dean, makes drawings of all the churches—The writer's apology for becoming, even thus briefly, the biographer of her husband—His clerical career, studies, and pursuits—Translates from the Greek and Latin Fathers—List of his

published works—Takes his degree as Bachelor of Divinity at Trinity College, Cambridge—Acts as a magistrate at Tavistock—His Hymns—A selection from them.

Vicarage, Tavistock, September 12th, 1833.

MY DEAR SIR,

HAVING mentioned, from Orgar and Elfrida, Drake and Browne, down to Mary Colling, all those personages who may be said to deserve a place in the Biography of Tavistock, I have now but one other to name; and to him I am largely indebted for the information he has afforded me in the progress of these letters.—Need I add that it is of my husband I would speak? His researches in this neighbourhood; his writings, both published and in manuscript; his various pursuits, and his labours, for more than twenty years, for the pulpit of our church, would *alone* entitle him to hold no mean station in the Biography of Devon. But when to these claims are added his discoveries, *and his were the first*, on the western limits of Dartmoor, connected, as they are, with the earliest periods of British history, it would not only be doing injustice to himself but to his native place, did I omit him. I feel, nevertheless, that the mention of Mr. Bray, under the head of Biography, is a delicate task for me to execute, so as to speak the truth, and yet avoid egotism; since to write of one so nearly and dearly connected, is very much like writing about one's self. I shall not sit down, therefore, to indite a regular life of him. I shall merely give you some slight account of his original destination; his change of profession (and the motives which induced it) from the bar to the church; his pur-

suits, &c., in brief succession. And here and there I shall add some few anecdotes respecting certain characters with whom he was brought in contact, which, as they amused me when I have heard them related, may possibly afford some little entertainment to you: if so, my end will be answered; and I am fully aware, from my own experience, that you have too much good nature to frown at trifles when they are harmless, or introduced with a wish to please.

My husband was born in the Abbey-house, at Tavistock. He was the only son (though not the only child, for he has a sister younger than himself) of the late Edward Bray, Esq., who, from an early period of life till the time of his death, in 1816, (for he was of the legal profession,) was employed in the management of the property of his Grace the Duke of Bedford in this part of England. Mr. Bray married Mary, widow of Arthur Turner, Esq.,* and daughter of Doctor Brandreth, of Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire, a physician of eminence in his day; and not unknown as having, for many years, enjoyed an intimate acquaintance with Pope, Aken-side, Garrick, and many other distinguished persons of that age, who frequently assembled round his table. Of these, and of her ancestry (of which she was not a little proud, usually asserting that they were related to many of the most antient and noble families in England), Mrs. Bray used to tell several amusing anecdotes with great vivacity. She

* His daughter (by this first marriage) Dionysia, inherited the whole of Mr. Turner's large fortune; and married her cousin, Henry Brandreth, Esq., of Houghton House, Bedfordshire, where she still resides.

died at the age of eighty-eight, about four years ago.

It was Mrs. Bray who determined that her son should be named after the family of Atkins, a branch of her own ancestry, who were remarkable for having a father and his two sons all judges in the times of the Charles's. All three were buried in Westminster Abbey, where their monument still exists; and the portrait of one of them still hangs in Guildhall; he, I believe, having obtained that honourable distinction in consequence of his being one of the commissioners for the allotment of the ground to the several claimants after the fire of London.

The portrait of Sir Robert Atkins (son of Sir Edward) hangs in the library of our house, and bears so strong a resemblance to my husband, that if he were decorated with the same legal robes, wore his hair in the same fashion, and was as young as Sir Robert at the time he sat to the artist, it might pass for his picture, and would be commended for its fidelity both of feature and expression. This portrait was, by the Brandreth family, usually considered a Vandyke. It is certainly a very beautifully painted picture; but truth obliges me to lessen its value, by positively asserting that it is no Vandyke, but a production from the pencil of Dahl, who lived in the reign of Charles II., and who, though he left but few works, did enough to establish his reputation as an artist of more than ordinary merit, of which indeed this portrait alone is sufficient proof. One of the Atkynses was the author of the celebrated 'County History of Gloucester,' and a man of the most extensive learning and acquirements.

My husband, on once visiting Gloucester Cathedral, happened to mention that he was a descendant of the historian, and was treated with the greatest respect on that account.

Little Edward Atkyns received his name at a christening accompanied with all the liberal hospitality of those days when christenings were great events in the family history. Godfathers and godmothers were generally then chosen with a view to some future benefit to the new-made Christian, and Mrs. Bray determined not altogether to lose sight of the usual hope for her son, at least in one quarter; so she fixed on Arthur Tremaine, Esquire, of Sydenham House, an old bachelor, who, in consequence of his father being then alive, used, at the age of sixty, to go by the name of *young Mr. Tremaine*. On what account the other godfather might be chosen, if any particular motive existed for the choice, I do not know, but he was a curious character, and was invariably called *Brigadier Herring*.

The Brigadier was a very tall, stout man, who had served in the wars, and possessed also the additional importance attached to having been a great traveller, which in his day was more remarkable than in our own. Mr. Bray perfectly well remembers, though he was then a child, that whenever his godfather dined at the Abbey House, he was fond of appearing in the dress in which he had been presented to Marie Antoinette, Queen of France, being a blue coat with a red collar and cuffs. With this dress the Brigadier invariably put on a change of manners; for he became courtly and ceremonious, and delighted in repeating the circumstances of the honours he had enjoyed in his introduction to the

Majesty of France. And with this story, though fifty times told, the Brigadier as constantly regaled his friends as they did him whenever he came to dine with them.

The Brigadier's grandeur, however, was mostly on the outside, for (whether from extravagance or misfortune I do not know) his purse was not always well filled; and, at the christening of little Edward Atkins, he did Mrs. Bray the honour of borrowing five guineas of her, to present the nurse with her fee and the baby with a spoon, but which he afterwards never happened to recollect. Tired however at length with single-blessedness and ill-fortune, the Brigadier tried matrimony as a relief to both, and married an old lady for her money, declaring that had Marie Antoinette but had her head left on her shoulders to attain the same age, she would have been just such another looking person. But the lady probably not being so confident in the power of her own charms, in which nearly seventy years had made some havoc, attempted to repair by dress what she wanted in beauty, decorating herself in flowers, frock, and sash, like a girl just escaped from school; and tormented her husband with a jealousy that allowed him no repose.

So much for the godfathers of little Edward Atkins. He was, I am assured, a very good boy, only very much spoilt, and his mother's darling, consequently he became somewhat unruly; and when such was the case nothing would so soon quiet him as a pen or a pencil. His father often told him that so great was his propensity to imitation when a child, that he could write his own name very legibly before he knew a single letter of the alphabet.

Whilst yet a mere boy, he made a portrait of his father, and of two other gentlemen. Though these drawings, of course, possessed no knowledge of art, yet so good were the likenesses, that it was agreed to have them framed. I have also the portrait of an old servant of the family by the same hand, and about the same period, which is such a characteristic drawing of an old man's head, that I hesitate not in saying it would be worth engraving.

On Mr. Bray's taking the picture of himself to be framed at Exeter (where, indeed, with those of the other gentlemen, his son had just executed it, whilst they were together at the inn), it so chanced that the master of the shop possessed a considerable knowledge of the arts, and being requested to give his opinion of the portrait, replied, that he could not say much for the execution of the work, but that it was an admirable likeness. "But what," said Mr. Bray, "will you think when I tell you that this boy is the artist?" The other said it was impossible so very young a child could have produced it. "It is true, I do assure you," replied Mr. Bray, "the lad is my own son." It is perhaps a pity that this very strong natural propensity was never regularly cultivated, since, in after life, Edward never resorted to the pencil excepting as a relaxation from other studies. The principles of art he never acquired, yet his sketches, merely by eye and feeling, have been honoured with the praises of a Stothard and a Landseer, who both said nature had given Mr. Bray every quality requisite for an artist.

Little Edward's own inclinations, however, were always for the church; and one of his childish amusements, when he visited at the house of some

old ladies who were very fond of him, was to dress himself up in the maid's best white apron by way of surplice, and to bury two grotesque wooden figures that stood over the mantel-piece, representing Adam and Eve. I relate these childish anecdotes, because I think so much may be traced of natural characteristics in the very sports of children, whilst trifles that, were they repeated, might excite the contempt of the critic, may make a deeper impression than he would be disposed to admit on the feelings and fancy of youth. The great difficulty was about Edward's education. His father wished to send him to Eton, and to make a great man of him, but poor Mrs. Bray never would consent to let her darling loose from her apron string. Unluckily she had heard that a boy had been drowned at Eton, so nothing could prevail with her to let Edward go thither for fear anything should happen to her dear and only son, who represented in his name and (she flattered herself) in his person the great Sir Edward Atkyns, the pride of her own ancestry. Too much doating affection was her only fault towards the boy; and this very fondness sometimes tormented him; for wishing that he should have what was then in fashion, (and has never been so since,) namely, a pair of fine *peaks*, as they were called, one being on either side the forehead, she caused the hair to be regularly shaved off, as if she were desirous that he might grow up like one of the portraits of Sir Walter Raleigh, in the days of Elizabeth; and so great was the dread entertained by the child for these shavings, that he would run and hide himself in a closet, and scream most heartily when the operation was about to begin.

So great was his love of a book, that he never was so happy as when he could get into a corner and sit down and read, hour after hour, alone ; and being a most bashful boy, even to shamefacedness, his mother's praises of him before company were always such a penalty that he was most glad to escape the hearing. He possessed a good voice, but was so shy that he could never be persuaded to sing unless he crept behind a curtain or under the table. The next inclination which this bashful boy discovered was for poetry ; and, at a very early age, writing verses became to him a source of almost constant delight. Nor must I here omit the mention of the following circumstance, which occurred while he was yet a boy. Mr. Tasker, a celebrated physiognomist, and, of his day, the greatest Greek scholar in the West, who had studied the art of reading the human countenance more from Theophrastus and other classic authorities than from Lavater, was a constant observer of every face he chanced to look upon which afforded any promise for his remarks. Tasker also was an adept in anatomy ; his principal work, indeed, was a dissertation on the wounds and death of the heroes described in the ' Iliad,' proving the scientific knowledge of the poet. He likewise wrote an ode on the warlike genius of Great Britain, which, though praised, was also censured by Dr. Johnson, for making the Genius of this country a woman. Mr. Bray, in company with his son, one day chanced to meet the physiognomist at Hatherleigh. Mr. Tasker had never before seen the boy, nor indeed knew of his existence ; but the latter, after dinner, having retired to ramble about the neighbouring fields, the former observed to Mr.

Bray, "I understand that young gentleman is your son. I do not think he has spoken one word during the whole of dinner time; but I will venture to say he is a poet."

"A poet!" exclaimed Mr. Bray, "I design him for a lawyer:—what makes you say so?" "I judge from his eyes," replied Mr. Tasker. Mr. Bray said that certainly the boy had a great love of poetry, and a habit, he believed, of writing verses, though he always hid or destroyed his productions; and that his pursuits, in general, were of a studious and solitary character.

That the physiognomist was not mistaken in his prediction, I shall endeavour to prove before I close this letter, by inserting several original compositions that have *never yet seen the light*, and which, I think, you will deem not unworthy being drawn from their present obscurity, and will likewise show that Browne is not the only poet to whom Tavistock has given birth. To continue the narrative:—I should have mentioned, when speaking of the godfathers of little Edward, that Mr. Tremaine, designing to confer on him a benefit, had, whilst yet a child, given to a clergyman who was related to him the living of Lew Trenchard, in Devon, to hold till his godson should be of sufficient age to take the duties of it upon himself. But this kind act of Mr. Tremaine was rendered useless by Mr. Bray's determination to make the boy a lawyer; so that his cousin held the living till about a year ago, when he died.

The difficulty of how to get the boy educated remained for some time in full force; since Eton and drowning having become synonymous in the mind of his mother, nothing could prevail with her to let

him go thither; and a strange prejudice existed in the family against any other public school. Indeed, it seemed very doubtful if he had any chance left of going to school at all, till his father so far mustered courage as to seize the occasion, in the absence of his wife for a few days, to smuggle little Edward off to school; and in order that his mother's heart might be set at ease, by having him near home, he carried him no farther than to Moreton Hampstead; where he was set down, with a thousand cautions and charges about his safety, under the care of the Rev. Mr. Cake, curate of the parish, the Rev. Mr. Clack being rector of the same.

The history of the worthy rector was not a little remarkable. One of the Lords Courtenay (the father of the present Viscount I believe) fell in love with a most beautiful and amiable girl, the daughter of an inn-keeper at one of the universities where he was a student. He married her; and extending his kindness towards her family, he brought her brother, Mr. Clack, up to the church, and gave him the living of Moreton. This gentleman was as well informed as he was deserving, and possessed a good library. His curate, Mr. Cake, though no great scholar, was as perfect a gentleman as Lord Chesterfield himself would desire to see, but without any of the objectionable parts of that nobleman's system of politeness. By him, little Edward Atkyns was taken as much care of as if he had been made of china, and in danger of being broken. He learnt no more Latin and Greek than he pleased; but, as he loved learning, he took very aptly and eagerly as much as Mr. Cake had power to bestow, and a little more, which, in process of time, he gained for himself.

There was a book in the school, a very great favourite with the master, which the boys called the *fat book*, in ridicule of its being so very thin in bulk. This was an epitome of 'Lord Chesterfield's Letters,' the study of which (in the opinion of, and according to the example set by Mr. Cake) was of far more import than the classics. There is this to be said, however, in favour of Mr. Cake's system of education, that once a week he made the boys translate some of 'Pliny and Cicero's Letters' into their mother tongue; and afterwards caused them to compare their own performance with Melmoth's excellent translation. Thus, after all, Mr. Cake proved himself to be a lover of letters; and I have often heard Mr. Bray declare that by these means his attention was very early directed to style in composition. The master had also an English translation of every classic, which he kept in the sanctum sanctorum of his own bed-room; and thither would the boys enter by stealth, to consult what they called the *Blab Books*.

There was one thing in particular in which this gentleman displayed some antiquarian as well as classical knowledge—it was in a *conjecture*; and less happy ones have obtained for many a man the honour of being deemed worthy to become an F.S.A. The cooks of Moreton had a custom, which Molly at the school failed not to observe, of daily announcing to the boys the dinner hour, by saying—"Dinner's ready, *Soce*." Now Mr. Cake considered this to be a remnant of a Romanized British custom on the borders of Dartmoor; and that when the first invaders got a footing at Moreton Hampstead, they were in the habit of calling the native barbarians to feed at their general meal, by the familiar address of "*Socii*," or companions.

Amongst Edward's school-friends was Baldwin Fulford, a branch of one of the most ancient families in Devon, whose ancestors were distinguished in history from the times of the crusades down to those of the Stuarts. Baldwin Fulford, the first of that name, was so great a favourite with Cœur de Lion, that in the freedom of their friendship he ventured to say something which gave offence to the king. The courtiers, jealous of his influence, were in hopes it would be his ruin, and failed not to make the most of the offence. But Richard, either displeased at their malice, or too fond of his favourite to be long angry with him, merely said "Muzzle the bear." From that period a muzzle was added to the bear's head which was his crest. Another of this gallant race, or perhaps Baldwin himself, delivered a Christian lady, in the true chivalrous spirit of the day, from a Saracen who held her captive within the walls of his castle in Palestine; and, according to tradition, brought her home to England, where first he gave her liberty, and then offered her his hand, which she accepted, and lived with him the mistress of his feudal halls in Devon. And in commemoration of this victory two Saracens were granted as supporters to the arms of the family, which they still retain.

During the holidays, Edward was highly gratified by going home with his school-fellow to Great Fulford House; a noble mansion, very celebrated during the civil wars, and where Charles II. was at one time concealed.*

* When speaking of the Fulford family, I cannot resist mentioning (though it has certainly nothing to do with the subject of this sketch) a remarkable circumstance which happened to Miss La Roche, the sister of Mrs. Fulford: it will scarcely gain credit as being

Another of Edward's school companions was Sir John Collyton, whose father, whilst yet he was a babe in the cradle, took so strange a dislike to the poor boy, that he would not see him, and cut him off with a shilling, leaving all his property to his sister. William Dacre Adams, afterwards secretary to Mr. Pitt, was another of his school friends, together with his brother, now General Sir George Adams; and with these, and his other young companions, he was very happy: a circumstance which so mortified his mother, that when she tried to coax him home again from school, she left him in tears at her disappointment.

There were two or three very remarkable characters in the town of Moreton, who occasionally showed Edward some kind attention, and they deserve a mention amongst the oddities of their day. Fielding would have found in each a subject that might have furnished hints for character in his 'Tom Jones.' One of these was a physician, a Doctor Vial; whenever had a doctor a more happy name? He was a desperate lover of whist; Hoyle and Galen divided his nights and days: which was most studied, I presume not to say. But nobody amongst the ladies, old or young, was half so popular as the doctor. His morning visits soothed nervous affections, and his evening hand at cards was generally irresistible. Could Doctor Vial have played twenty rubbers a night, he might have found

true, yet it is so. Miss La Roche went with a party to see the Peak at Derbyshire. Being tired, she got up behind a clergyman who was riding. The horse fell when near the very summit of the peak. The clergyman and the animal were both killed; but Miss La Roche was providentially saved by her long hair getting entangled in one of the bushes.

partners for them all among the somewhat antiquated virgins of Moreton Hampstead. They even lost their money to him as willingly as they would their hearts. One evening, in the midst of a deal, horrible to relate, he fell off his chair in a fit! Consternation seized on all the company. Was he alive or dead? they inquired with the frantic energy of a Lady Randolph, when asking the fate of her son. What was to be done? All help was given; hartshorn was poured almost pure down his throat by one kind female friend, whilst another feelingly singed the end of his nose with burnt feathers: all were in the breathless agony of suspense for his safety. At length he showed signs of life, and retaining the last fond idea which had possessed him at the moment he fell into the fit, to the joy of the whole company, exclaimed "What is trumps?"

The other prominent character in the society of Moreton was a certain old Mr. Fynes, who, I believe, was a justice of the peace. Red-post Fynes was his name; for being the holder of a good deal of land, and considering himself a man of taste as well as of property, he loved to be distinguished for both; so he painted all the gates of his fields a bright vermilion. Red-post Fynes had a favourite relative whom he used to call his nevvv. His nevvv he brought up to the church, and he afterwards rose to the dignity of a dean. The old gentleman was remarkable for never having been able to learn to spell even the commonest words in his own language; so that on the birth of his daughter he wrote word to a friend, that he had the pleasure to inform him that his wife was brought to bed of a fine *gull*. The word *usage* this very ingenious gen-

tleman spelt without one letter belonging to it, and yet contrived to produce something like the word, at least in sound, for he wrote it thus—*yowzitch*. The dean finding that his uncle's orthography became a subject of perpetual jokes all the country round, grew rather ashamed of it, and so made the old gentleman a present of an Entick. But it was of little use; for he could never hit on the two first letters of any word to turn it out in the dictionary. There was one spot in Moreton which Mr. Fynes considered elevated him, whilst he filled it, to a post as important as any occupied by any magistrate throughout the whole county; and that was his seat as president in the Punch-bowl tree: for it so happened there was in Moreton near his house a very old and very grotesque tree, cut and clipped into the form of a punch-bowl; whilst a table and seats were literally affixed within the green enclosure, to which they ascended by a little ladder, like the companion-ladder of a ship.

Here the worthies of the place, of the Squire Western school, would resort, and considered it a point of honour to drink till they could scarcely see each other across the table; and there would they often tarry till they 'roused the night owl in a catch;' whilst nothing could be more ludicrous than the picture presented by this nest of Bacchanals in the midst of the smooth-shaven verdure, receiving all the dust from the high-road beneath them, which mingled with the clouds of their own tobacco. The Punch-bowl tree still, I believe, exists at Moreton, though the oddities of the place, who at one period gave it notoriety, have for years been in their graves.

The shyness of little Edward was not conquered at Moreton; a public school perhaps might have done something towards a cure. So great was his bashfulness, that he could never find courage to ask any young lady to dance with him, till all the other boys had picked out the prettiest girls; and then some homely and neglected damsel, who had been left sitting alone, fell to his lot, as the last partner, perhaps, to be found in the room. This natural shyness argued very unfavourably for the profession which his father in his heart had destined for him, more especially as he was a boy who loved poetry and romance, had no aptitude for business, cared nothing for money, scarcely knew that two and two made four in his arithmetic, was so timid in company that he kept silence for fear of hearing his own voice, had a decided love of plain dealing, and thought the wrong side of a question should never be made to appear the right. Edward's father destined him for a lawyer: there never was a more mistaken choice.

At length Mr. Cake removed from Moreton to Alphington, near Exeter. In this village there was an opposition school, the success of which, considering the notorious adventures of the master, is not to be accounted for, unless it arose from his teaching the boys at a cheaper rate than the more aristocratic and respectable establishment of Mr. Cake. The name of the master was Halloran. I conclude by this that he must have derived his origin from the land of Erin. It is the more likely, as he was of a very warm and passionate temper,—one of those who act first and think afterwards; and this he once did in a way that caused him to be indicted for murder in a cri-

minal court. The deed took place whilst he was in the navy, before he set up the profession of training boys in the way they should go; a thing in which, it is to be hoped, his first maxim was "Do as I say, and not as I did." For he had stabbed a man in a passion on board of ship; and if his legal adviser had not stopped his mouth on the trial, by preventing his declaring he was drunk when he gave the blow, he would have criminated himself; and it is not unlikely that his own declaration, with this additional offence, would have turned the balance of justice, so as to make him kick the air if not the beam. Mr. Cake's boys used to look down with sovereign contempt on Mr. Halloran's boys; and jibes and jests about Jack Ketch, &c., were never wanting in the small fire of schoolboy wit, when there was any skirmishing between them. Halloran's lads, in fact, were generally the sons of petty tradesmen in Exeter, or of persons who got for their children a cramming of Latin and Greek as cheap as they could. Amongst them, however, there was one youth of uncommon talent; and who, in consequence of that talent, united to his own industry and the kindness of friends, gradually rose to high distinction in the profession of the law, and would, had he lived, in all probability have become Lord Chancellor. This youth was no less a person than the late Lord Gifford, who commenced his legal career as clerk to an attorney in Exeter. Many years after, he and Mr. Bray (during the time the latter was at the bar) went the same circuit, became friends, and often talked over their schoolboy days together. Halloran's finale must not be forgotten: though he had escaped hanging and drowning too, he was

nevertheless fated to pass through troubled waters ; for, in consequence of forging a frank in the name of Mr. Garrow, he was transported to Botany Bay.

Emancipated from school, Edward speedily verified the prediction of the physiognomist, for he gave himself up heart and soul to poetry ; and in his eighteenth year a neat little volume appeared of these juvenile productions, which were principally circulated amongst friends, yet not wanting the favourable notice of some of the critics of the day. And Park, in his edition of ‘ Ritson’s Collection of Select English Songs,’ gave, with warm commendation, the only two songs that appeared in that early volume *.

But it was not poetry alone that engaged his attention ; for even at this early period he formed the scheme of writing a history of his native town, made his notes for it, and commenced those excursions which led the way to his subsequent investigations and discoveries on Dartmoor. His pencil was not idle ; and he relieved the hours of more severe application by the study of music. He had a fine ear, and in this pursuit took so much delight, that in a few years he composed an immense number of original melodies, a few of which have been very beautifully arranged (the words being likewise Mr. Bray’s) by a lady accomplished in that science. To these studies he added also those of the modern languages. I am induced more particularly to mention this, because the familiar acquaintance he formed with the Italian and its literature gained for him, a few years

* These songs I have introduced (at page 183 and page 227), together with his ballad of ‘ Midsummer Eve,’ in the first volume of Fitz, of Fitz-ford ; a legend of Devon.

after, that intimate friendship with the celebrated Mr. Mathias, which proved one of the happiest circumstances of his life. He had a great aptitude for learning languages, and spoke the French like his native tongue; for Tavistock being at that period the chief dépôt for French prisoners on parole, he formed an acquaintance with several French officers of great intelligence, particularly with a Monsieur Cayeux, who was taken prisoner during the early part of the war. German literature also attracted his attention; and his high estimation of Gesner induced him to attempt a series of English Idyls. The first part of these was published in 1800; and though like the former volume it was circulated principally amongst friends, and little advertised, yet was it most favourably noticed by some of the leading periodicals; more especially, I believe, by the 'British Critic.'

I must not omit to mention, that before Mr. Bray's going to London, the late Duke of Bedford came down to Tavistock for the purpose of raising a volunteer corps among his tenantry. That no appearance of favouritism might take place, the names of some of the most respectable of the sons of the neighbouring gentry (among them was Mr. Bray) were to be drawn for, to decide whether they were to serve as officers or privates. Mr. Bray's lot was to serve in the latter capacity. He, however, was never called upon to do so; as the Duke, on his return, gave, I believe, offence to the ministry by a speech in the House of Peers; and his offer to raise the corps was not accepted. But some time after, however, on a corps of miners being established as volunteers, under the name of the Royal Devon Miners, to be com-

manded by the Vice Warden, Warwick Heale Tonkin, Esq., Mr. Bray's father and Mr. Tonkin's son were appointed captains, and Edward was fixed on as captain-lieutenant. The ordinary commissions were signed by the Lord Warden, according to an act then recently passed; but as the grade of captain-lieutenant was not specified in such act, Mr. Bray's commission required the sign manual; and King George III., therefore, honoured him with the title of "His well-beloved Edward Atkyns Bray, Esq.," in a regular army commission, excepting such alteration as the name of the corps required. Mr. Bray still preserves this commission as a relic, as well of regard as of veneration for that most honoured sovereign*.

It was deemed by government that the services of the miners, as they were well acquainted with the management of machinery, would be more efficient as artillerymen; and into an artillery corps they were therefore turned. Mr. Bray became their cap-

* I cannot here omit the mention of a circumstance which brought Mr. Bray in contact with royalty. Some time after his arrival in London, he had the honour to meet the present king, then Duke of Clarence, at a party. As he had never before been in company with any of the royal family, a lady belonging to the house had scarcely given him the hint that he would find it was the custom for the whole of the company to rise on the entrance of the Duke, when His Royal Highness walked into the room. He soon after beckoned to her, when she joined him; and, to Mr. Bray's surprise, she speedily returned, and asked if he could guess wherefore His Royal Highness had beckoned to her. Of course Mr. Bray replied that he could not conjecture. She said it was for the purpose of asking who *he* was; at the same time intimating a hope that Mr. Bray bore His Majesty's commission. Certainly Mr. Bray was tall enough for a grenadier officer, being six feet in height, and very upright; but I believe he did not tell the story in what way he already bore a commission.

tain commandant till they were incorporated with the stannary artillery of Cornwall. In that capacity he was twice in barracks at Devonport, then Dock, previous to his being called to the bar, of which I shall soon have occasion to speak. And here I cannot omit an amusing anecdote respecting his various professions. At a visitation, soon after he had taken holy orders, the Rev. Dr. Hunt, a well-known clergyman in Devon, thus addressed him :—" Mr. Bray, I have had the pleasure of seeing you but three times in my life : the first was in your regimentals, at a dinner given by General England to the military ; the second was in your wig and gown, as a lawyer, in the court at Exeter ; and now I see you in gown and bands as Vicar of Tavistock."

In the year 1801 Mr. Bray removed to London, and was entered as a student at the Middle Temple : five years after he was called to the bar. During his residence in the Temple, though he devoted a considerable portion of his time to the study of the law, he did not fail to cultivate, and assiduously, his more favourite pursuits, and applied himself closely to Italian poetry. In this language he once ventured to write a sonnet, and addressed it to his friend Mr. Mathias. He likewise sedulously studied the works of Lord Bacon, and wrote copious marginal notes on the greater part of the writings of that eminent philosopher. These notes Dr. Shaw, of the British Museum, expressed a wish that Mr. Bray would publish, appended to a new edition of that author. I mention this as a proof of the good opinion that great naturalist entertained of my husband. The notes on Bacon, however, remain still in manuscript in this house. He had a great respect

for the Doctor, whose real worth was best appreciated by an intimate acquaintance, since his manners were somewhat fantastic, as he was fond, perhaps, by way of *delassement*, of conversing on ordinary subjects too much in the style of the fashionables of the day. So fond was the doctor of trifles, that he was never better pleased than when requested to repeat "Little Red Riding-Hood." And indeed it had been one of his amusements to decorate the walls of his favourite room at the British Museum, by sticking it all over with butterflies which he had cut out for that purpose from the work of a brother naturalist. Such were the trifles with which a man whose fame will be most enduring amused his leisure hours! His own brother, also a doctor (of divinity), used to call him Doctor Cockeshell.

In London Mr. Bray became acquainted with Mr. Edwards, the celebrated bookseller, whose library, besides being decorated by the finest Etruscan vases, was a treasure house for the most rare and valuable works; among others, the *Princeps* edition of Herodotus. It was by Mr. Edwards that he was introduced to Mr. Mathias; when their mutual love of Italian literature led the way to that bond of friendship which so long subsisted between them, and was only interrupted by the departure of the former for Italy. In London, also, Mr. Bray became known to Sheridan, at the house of Mr. Richardson, M. P., with whose family he was on the most intimate terms. Richardson was the author of the 'Heiress;' and, with some others, wrote the 'Rolliad.' The acquaintance of this last-named gentleman with Sheridan was a most unhappy circumstance for his family, as it induced him to embark

too much of his property in the losing speculation of Drury Lane Theatre; and helped on those embarrassments which left them at his death in such reduced circumstances, that a widow and four very amiable daughters had but very inadequate means of support*. At the time Mr. Bray knew Sheridan, he had so habituated himself to the pleasures of the bottle, that he had lost much of that vivacity which at one period brought into play his wit and talents, and rendered his society so bewitching. Sheridan, in fact, had sunk into a toper; and there was very little left of what he had been but an occasional burst of vivacious expression; when his eye, always remarkable, would become lighted up with a lustre that was almost more than natural. But he would soon sink again into an ordinary person; and to take two glasses to every other's one seemed with him the chief object of attention: so completely may the brightest talents be lost or obscured by the degrading love of drink.

At Richardson's, likewise, Mr. Bray used to meet that most amiable and excellent man, Mr. Shield the composer, of whose character and manners he always speaks in terms of the highest esteem. He frequently heard this delightful musician with his violin accompany Richardson's daughters, whilst they would sing to their piano some of the composer's songs. Shield was a man of the finest feelings, and so alive to harmony, that his tears were

* Only two of these daughters are now living. Miss Fanny Richardson, a woman of the most refined manners and accomplished mind, resides, on account of the smallness of her income, in Germany—a sad exile. She is the authoress of some elegant poetry, and a little novel of much merit, called 'Truth and Fashion.'

frequently the accompaniment of his most favourite melodies.

In Devonport Mr. Bray had become acquainted with Dr. Wolcott, better known as Peter Pindar; and in London with Barry the painter, with Dr. Coombe, Browne the celebrated traveller, Flaxman the sculptor, John Kemble, the good-natured and amiable John Taylor, editor of the Sun, with Sir Joseph Banks, Sir Francis Bourgeois, Lady Hamilton, and many other eminent or celebrated persons of the day. Concerning these, I have a few anecdotes which may not be altogether devoid of interest in the repetition. Mr. Bray was also slightly acquainted with Walking Stuart. On looking over some of the notes he made during his residence in the Middle Temple, I found a paper written after his having received a visit from the philosopher, paid to him in his chambers. I shall here copy it verbatim, as it is not a little curious.

“ Memorandums after an interview and conversation with Walking Stuart.

“This philosopher, like his predecessor of antiquity who instituted the Peripatetic school, has acquired his name from his perambulations on foot. The difference between them is, however, that the former has visited almost every country in the world in search of knowledge, and the latter investigated and taught it within the narrow limits of the grove of Academus. Stuart has not only taken greater pains in the pursuit of intellectual wealth, but, besides rivalling the Athenian in his oral communications, has diffused it in his writings. To institute a comparison between them would lead me too far, and require greater talents than I possess. I will

content myself, therefore, with stating a few remarks I made during the short time I was in his company, and will first introduce him by a description of his person.

“Had I not, from his name, supposed him to be a Scotsman, his person alone would have suggested it. From his language, which is generally an infallible criterion, I should not have been able to form any conjecture; nor indeed do I mean to decide what countryman he is. Were I even to ask him, the answer I should receive would probably be—‘I am a native of the world;’ for in reply to a question, ‘Whether he had any children?’ he said, ‘Yes, the good and virtuous are all my children.’ Apparently between fifty and sixty years of age, he is rather tall and lusty. His face, with high cheek bones and Roman nose, is dark by nature or by his travels in hot countries. His forehead bears the wrinkles of reflection more than age. By his dress we may imagine Philosophy is not more liberal to her sons at present than she was of old. He wore a black coat, over which was thrown a spencer with half the arms cut off. Whether it were from economy or taste, I thought it had by no means an unpleasing effect. I understand that for some time after he returned from Asia he wore a Persian dress. His hair was powdered. I mention this as, in these days, the hair has expressed a great deal of meaning*.

“The word philanthropy is of too limited a signification to express the system upon which he acts: it is not benevolence to man alone, but to every animated being. He assumes, therefore, the name

* This was written soon after the days of the French Revolution.

of an Homoousiast, from *ὁμοουσιος*, ejusdem essentiae, consubstantialis; compounded of *ὁμος* and *ουσια*, similis essentia.

“From a short conversation, or rather being present at a conversation which he held with another gentleman, I cannot be presumed to have formed a precise and correct idea of his opinions; but I am told that he professes himself an atheist. It has been denied that any human being could really disbelieve the existence of a Deity. Whoever has professed it has been held to do so from vanity and a wish for notoriety. But of this I am convinced, that, whatever are the opinions which Stuart professes, he sincerely believes them from a conviction in his own mind of their supposed truth. The conversation he held in my hearing was mostly of a moral nature, with only a few references to the subject of religion. However, as a proof that his opinions are peculiar on this head, I need only mention that, in quoting some passages from Pope’s Essay on Man, he said the following couplet he would have written thus :

‘ All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body *matter* is, and *power* the soul;’

instead of—

‘ Whose body *Nature* is, and *God* the soul.’

“Of the philosophy of Epictetus he said the sum was no more than this :

‘ What can’t be cured
Must be endured.’

“Bolingbroke he considered one of the greatest geniuses that ever lived, though he had his prejudices.

“The mind, Stuart said, was constantly employed in *action* of thought, or *object* of thought. The first is where the mind thinks on things of its own creation, or embodies abstract ideas and gives action to non-existences, such as angels, devils, &c. The second is when it is busied in real things, and such as are objects of the senses. Men had considered mind as a *sack*, and stuffed it with all kinds of learning; but it should be considered as an instrument, and should be so managed as to bring all its own powers into action. If it be filled, let it be filled with its own ideas.

“A man of science is not always a man of sagacity: generally, indeed, otherwise. We have made great advances in science, but little in sagacity.

“Of Sir Isaac Newton, Stuart said that, though he disclaimed hypothesis, and professed to rest his philosophy on facts, he is yet guilty of an hypothesis by calling the *influence* which bodies have to adhere or to repulse *gravitation*, i. e. making the effects the cause.

“Of Horne Tooke, he said that he was no sound reasoner, and was too much tied down to the logic of the schools, with his ‘*grant this*, and his ‘*ergo*.’ He was also too fond of sarcasm, or a piece of mere wit. Tooke, in reply to the bishops who thought his doctrines might prejudice Christianity, said that was no concern of his, let them see to that. Adams, President of America, he considered had given the most correct account of popular governments; he in a manner prognosticated the dreadful effects of the French Revolution, by pointing out the dangers of investing a democratical government with too

much power. This he proved from history, and the French have given another example.

"Stuart said that ethics would not admit of mathematical truths, but analogical, viz.: sometimes it is virtue to kill a man. Some, he observed, called *doubt* the gate of knowledge; but he called it the very temple itself.

"His travels on foot, he told us, were principally designed to investigate moral truth, the progress of mind, and human happiness. China is the only country he has not visited. He formerly used a vegetable, but now an animal diet. He wants strength of a morning unless he eats his constant supper, fat ham. He never drinks wine, but malt liquors; smokes sometimes of an evening, and now and then goes to a royal theatre for relaxation. He likes the Serpentine River in Hyde Park for the air and *view*. He is rather deaf; speaks deliberately, yet in the most appropriately eloquent style. In a late publication he has attacked the critical reviewers. His philosophy is to teach man how best to promote his happiness; and his study is the *discipline* of the mind. His great conclusion is, that *virtue is happiness*.

"He goes every Sunday evening to Mr. Taylor's."

Of Browne, the traveller, I have not heard Mr. Bray relate many anecdotes, as he was so very silent and sedate a personage that he seldom entered into conversation of any length, and did not talk much about his travels. Of the surpassing beauty, the talents and vivacity of Lady Hamilton I have heard much from Mr. Bray's account of her.

Her person, when he knew her, was the largest of the large ; but her face was still exquisitely beautiful both in feature and expression, with large eyes that seemed to speak her every thought and feeling. She had a peculiar grace in her vivacity, and sang delightfully. He once heard her sing, in an inimitable style, an Italian comic song, in which she performed both parts or characters engaged in the scene. The song represented a maestro di capella teaching a young nun to sing. Mr. Bray was informed by his friend, the late Admiral Bedford, who was intimately acquainted both with her and Nelson, that the hero's attachment to her commenced in a most romantic friendship ; nor would the old Admiral admit that Nelson had ever gone beyond what was strictly right in his devotion to this Circe. If this be true, it was a pity that any friendship for another should have caused Nelson to part from an unoffending wife, whose only fault was that of being her rival's inferior in talents and attractions.

In London Mr. Bray met Horne Tooke at a dinner party, where some dispute arose about the volunteer system. Tooke, who was surrounded by his admirers and friends (amongst whom was Sir Francis Burdett), reprobated the system just named in a very violent manner, which might have arisen, as Mr. Bray afterwards learned, in consequence of his own proffered services having been refused. This attack was levelled against the gentleman of the house, who, feeling himself hard pressed, turned round to my husband and said, that it was scarcely right that he, who was only a private, should bear the brunt of such an unmeasured attack when a captain was present.

Mr. Bray happened to be seated next Horne Tooke, who absolutely turned round in his chair, and immediately opened his fire upon him. Previous to this dinner, Mr. Bray had felt an extreme degree of curiosity to meet Horne Tooke, and entertained the highest opinion of the talents and acuteness he had shown in his first edition of the 'Diversions of Purley.' But Tooke's conversation after dinner had been of so improper and even gross a nature, that, coupled with his political violence, it had effectually removed all the previous sense of respect which Mr. Bray entertained for him; and enabled him, notwithstanding his natural diffidence and his youth, to be cool and collected in his reply to arguments so absurd, that only one need be specified: for Tooke gravely asserted that give him but time, and he would collect together maid-servants who, with their mops and broom-sticks, would turn all the volunteers to the right-about.

Mr. Bray asked him if courage were not the characteristic of Englishmen; and begged to know if Englishmen ceased to be such by becoming volunteers? This turned the tide in his favour; though the decided admirers of Horne Tooke were not a little surprised to find that a young man, and a modest one too, would venture to contradict their oracle. And indeed Sir Francis Burdett took an opportunity afterwards of saying to Mr. Bray, "I knew not what you had said to my friend, as I did not hear the whole of the conversation; but you have done what no other person, to my knowledge, has ever done before—you have put Horne Tooke in a passion."

Amongst Mr. Bray's literary friends he had the

pleasure to number Mr. Merrivale, the Barrister, who is well known for his continuation of Beattie's 'Minstrel,' and his translations from the Greek Anthology, and was, I believe, in Gifford's time, an occasional contributor to the 'Quarterly Review.' Miss Taylor, now Mrs. Austin, Doctor Coombe, his son Taylor Coombe, of the British Museum, and many others, were also his friends; and he occasionally met Mrs. Opie, Repton, Dr. Parr, and Jerningham in the society of London; whilst at the houses of Mr. Peter Moore, Lady Metcalf, Lady Macdonald, and others, Mr. Bray mingled with the fashionable world of the day, and was present at most of their parties. But the gaieties of the last-named circles did not draw him off from an attention to his professional pursuits; for, as far as the study of the law on general principles was connected with the history of his country, he took great delight in it: the technical detail was his aversion. But even this he endeavoured to conquer as far as it might be necessary; whilst the muse of English and Italian poetry became his solace in the intervals of his more serious occupations. Many of Mr. Bray's poetical pieces were written under the inspiration of strong feelings, produced by the circumstances of the moment. Thus his 'Lines on the Battle of Maida' were composed whilst the Park and Tower guns were proclaiming the victory. The 'Ode on the Death of Nelson,' which was published and very favourably received, was written whilst he was waiting to receive a party of friends at his chambers in the Temple, who came thither to witness the procession of boats from Greenwich Hospital up the Thames,

bearing the body of the hero previous to its interment in St. Paul's.

By those friends who were intimately acquainted with Mr. Bray during his residence in town, I have been informed, that though in general company, from his silent and retiring manners, he did not always appear to enjoy it so much as a young man might be expected to do, yet he had always a high relish for that in which either superior intelligence or worth might be found.

He was never remarked, however, for deficiency in vivacity when *tête-à-tête* with a companion or friend; but if a third person joined in the chat, he invariably gave place to him, and generally relapsed into his usual taciturnity. Yet, like the silent gentleman in the 'Spectator,' he was an attentive observer of all that passed; and frequently made any little occurrence the subject of an almost spontaneous poem, or copy of verses; for which *we* have no definite name, but which our neighbours the *French* have happily denominated *Vers de Société*. Of these he has a very large collection; I doubt if any poet of the present time has ever produced so many. Of their merit I must not speak; and as I shall here give only some few as examples, I leave you, who are so far more capable of forming a right judgment than myself, to declare if these *Vers de Société* would not alone entitle my husband to an honourable place amongst the poets of Devon. You will also see by them that Mr. Bray was most susceptible in feeling the charm of female society. He may perhaps be accused of having been too universally so; but the ladies have no cause to complain; since the

least beauty of person, mind, or character in them never escaped his notice, and generally inspired him to celebrate either in the most enthusiastic or impassioned verse. It is due, however, to the gravity of his clerical character to state, that, with few exceptions, all these poems were written when a very young man, and whilst at the bar. I shall here introduce a few of them, and then conclude this sketch of their author.

TO A LADY.

On expressing her opinion that men could obtain the object of their love more easily than women.

Think not that men alone, my fair,
Have power their passion to declare;
Or that your sex, whate'er they feel,
Must with a modest pride conceal.

If Love so partially is kind,
I'll doubt not if the God be blind.
But this, by Heaven! can ne'er be true:
For if he's partial, 'tis to you.

Woman, with livelier feelings warm'd,
In nature's loveliest mould is form'd;
Each trait that animates her face
Possesses such attractive grace,
That whoso looks, that self-same hour
Must own Love's all-subduing power.

Since youths there are whom trembling fear
Forbids the voice of Hope to hear,
(And who but Hope, 'mid powers above,
Can guide the half-fledged wings of Love?)
If *such* a youth be e'er so blest
Unconsciously to fire her breast—
Is not a look, a look alone,
Enough to make her passion known?
Nay—if she check the rising sigh,
And quench the lightning of her eye,
The dawn of passion still will break,
And kindle blushes in her cheek.

What if a veil those blushes hide?
Has nature other aids denied?

No—sympathy, with mystic spell,
Can still th' impassioned secret tell ;
Whilst every ear, by magic bound,
Heeds not, save one, th' enchanting sound.

Mark, too, my fair, night's lovely queen
Exerts her wondrous powers unseen ;
And, through the heavens as slow she glides,
Directs old Ocean's ample tides,
That sink or swell at her command,
To guard and bless our native land.

So, Beauty ! on its sea-girt shores,
Such powers, such secret powers are yours.
Your peerless charms with fond control,
Direct each passion of the soul ;
The dullest heart with transport fill,
And wake it with Love's rapturous thrill.

Temple, 1805.

AN APOLOGY TO A LADY,

Who had been informed by another, to whom it was communicated in confidence, that the author had characterized her as one who possessed good natural sense, but could not boast of a cultivated understanding.

The painter, whose enthusiast breast
With nature's beauties is impress'd,
Seeks not the garden's narrow round
Where art with studied step is found,
Who leads you to the trim alcove,
The marbled spring, and vista'd grove.

Ah ! no—He loves the rude-form'd bower,
The shepherd's shelter from the shower,
The weeping rill and wild cascade
That pours its fury through the glade ;
And through the forest's sylvan reign,
Views the blue hills or spreading main.

So, to his mistress's rapturous praise,
The poet, when he tunes his lays,
Sings not the wisdom of her tongue,
But how with feeling grace she sung ;
Not that she conn'd the pedant's rules,
Or own'd the logic of the schools,
But how her artless lips impart
Th' untutor'd dictates of her heart.

1806.

APOLOGY TO MY SISTER,

Who had informed another that I had not ventured to take my little niece in my arms, then about four months old.

When gemm'd by morn's refreshing dew,
The rose-bud opes its charms to view,
What hand profane in evil hour
Would dare to pluck the infant flower?
For sure it owns a sweeter bloom,
Breathes to the gale more rich perfume,
And blushes with a deeper red,
When ripening in its native bed.

When with a brother's joy I see
Thy lovely babe, so loved by thee,
Blushing with all her mother's charms,
I fear to take her to my arms;
For, in her smile her joy express'd,
She's lovelier on her mother's breast.
1806.

TO A LADY,

Who differed in opinion with the author, by preferring the violet to the rose.

Yes! more than every flower that blows,
Sweet maid! 'tis true, I love the rose:
For when its blushing charms I see,
I sigh, and fondly think of thee.

Thy cheek displays as soft a bloom,
Thy lips exhale as rich perfume;
And when it waves with graceful ease,
Fann'd by the pinions of the breeze,
Methinks I see thee, see thee move,
Attended by the train of love.

But thou—the flower that shrinks from view,—
Thou lov'st the violet's pallid hue.
If e'er this pale, this lowly flower,
Crush'd to the ground by some rude shower,
Sweet maid! thy pitying eye should see,
Oh! give one sigh, one thought to me!
1806.

TO A LADY,

On having accompanied her to Penshurst.

Doubtless, sweet maid ! in Penshurst groves,
 Where gallant Sydney sang his loves,
 And taught Arcadia's nymphs and swains
 To weave the dance on British plains ;
 Where Waller on the page of fame
 Inscribed his Sacharissa's name ;
 Ah, yes !—in these sweet scenes to rove,
 Must wake the youthful breast to love ;
 And teach it, in poetic strains,
 To breathe a lover's joys and pains.

But, to what spot soe'er, by Heaven,
 To roam with thee, the bliss is given ;
 Whether at morn in sunny glades ;
 At noon in solitary shades ;
 Or mid gay Pleasure's noisy train,
 Molesting midnight's silent reign ;
 My breast thy converse would inspire,
 And fill it with a poet's fire.

1806.

TO THE SAME,

On having chosen for an inscription "L'Amitié est l'Amour sans ailes."

You say, sweet maid ! some poet truly sings
Friendship is Love—but Love without his wings.
 Since 'tis my hapless lot, with sorrowing heart,
 From thee, ere long, my lovely friend ! to part ;
 Too soon, I fear, that sorrowing heart will prove
 Friendship has wings as swift as those of Love.

Yet Love and Friendship are, 'tis true, the same,
 Or, if they differ, differ but in name.
 Friendship is Love, when Reason's hand unties
 The silken bands that blind his laughing eyes ;
 Friendship is Love, without his torch, whose fire
 Is kindled at the shrine of fond desire ;
 Friendship is Love, when blunted is his dart,
 That only *strikes*, but never *wounds* the heart.

1806.

TO A LADY,

Playing on the Harp.

Fair as the fairest of the choir
That hymn before th' Almighty Sire,
And draw the rolling orbs above
To listen to their harps of love ;
When, light as Zephyr's sportive wings,
Thy flying fingers sweep the strings,
The chords, that twine my heart around,
All vibrate to the rapturous sound.

Oh ! could they, at this happy hour,
Speak what they feel, with equal power ;
These artless lines, that fail to move,
Alas ! thy pity or thy love,
Were worthy to be sung by thee,
And married to thy minstrelsy.

1806.

TO A LADY,

On the opening of a rose-bud.

I wonder not the budding rose
Whilst on your breast, to perfect bloom
Its infant petals should disclose,
And shed, fair maid ! more rich perfume.
For there it found a warmer bed,
Sunn'd by the radiance of your eyes ;
Stole from your lips a deeper red,
And drank more fragrance from your sighs.
But when you mark with pitying eye
No more its drooping head it rears ;
Ah ! better far that it should die,
Than e'er be water'd with your tears.

1809.

TO A LADY,

Who requested the author to burn her Letters.

The rose, thy short-lived gift, my fair !
Long mid my secret tablets press'd,
Though wither'd, still I guard with care—
And why ?—It once adorn'd thy breast.

Then think not to the flames I'll give
 (Though to deny thee be a sin)
 Thy dearer written leaves, where live
 The feelings of the heart within.
 1809.

TO MRS. S.—.

Blest in a husband's mutual love,
 You bid me a like blessing prove ;
 And kindly promise to commend
 To some fair maid your grateful friend :
 But first you bid me to declare
 What charms I wish my bride to share.

Know then, her stature, high or low,
 Should grace in every motion show.
 Her forehead, be it fair or brown,
 Ne'er but at vice should wear a frown.
 Her eyes, or black, or blue, or grey,
 Should pour the intellectual ray.
 Her cheek, or pale, or rosy red,
 With modest blushes should be spread.
 With smiling lips she must impart
 Nought but the dictates of her heart.
 She must not, light or dark her hair,
 Refuse a lock for me to wear.
 In fine—if like *yourself* she prove,
 She'll crown the fondest wish of love.

THE KISS*.

When, tempted by the luscious prize,
 The boy with trembling finger tries
 To rob the hive ; with buzzing wing
 The bee inflicts the burning sting :
 But (such the will of Fate unkind)
 He leaves it, with his life, behind.

* I have selected this little poem from many written by Mr. Bray whilst very young (when he relieved his legal studies by poetical composition), on account of its being an example of that style of impassioned song for which the ancient poetess Sappho was so celebrated. I know but of one instance more at all like it ; that is found in the deeply-impassioned verses (first pointed out to me by Mr. Southey) of " Day, in melting purple dying," in Zophiel, by the matchless Maria del Occidente.

So, when enraptured with thy charms,
 Dear maid ! I caught thee in my arms,
 And rifled from thy ruby lips
 More sweets than e'er the insect sips
 From flow'rets of the brightest hue,
 Methought my latest breath I drew :
 My bosom thrilled with pleasing pain ;
 My boiling blood swell'd every vein ;
 I panted, trembled, shiver'd, sigh'd,
 And, fainting with the bliss, had died ;
 But thou, by pity moved, or love—
 (Oh ! grant that it the last may prove !)
 Breathed in a kiss such vital breath
 As woke me from the trance of death.

TO A LADY,

On a Rose dropping from her bosom.

Whilst 'twas my happy lot last eve,
 With you, my fair ! the dance to weave,
 The silver rose, with punish'd pride,
 (For vainly with your breast it vied,)
 Fell from that breast, its envied seat,
 A prostrate suppliant at my feet.
 Pitying, I raised it from the ground,
 But felt indignant when I found
 That all its charms to art were due ;
 From whom its very breath it drew.

Oh ! then, forgive, if I forbear
 Again, sweet maid ! to place it there—
 There, where no empire art should gain,
 Nor aught but native candour reign.

TO T. I. MATHIAS, Esq.

To share thy converse in this blest retreat,
 The Arts' loved temple, and the Muses' seat ;
 To view the Tuscan pencil's magic powers,
 That shows fair Venus in her secret bowers,*
 Or claiming from the Phrygian boy the prize,*
 Whilst envy flashes from her rival's eyes ;

* Alluding to two pictures by Italian masters in his possession.

I e'en could fancy that I trod the ground
 For arms, for arts, for poesy renown'd ;
 And that the Thames, as roll its waves along*
 Thy flow'ry banks, was Arno, famed in song ;
 Were not Augusta's boast a nobler tide
 Than all the streams that through Italia glide.

So, when with wond'ring rapture I peruse
 Thy verse, a homage to the Tuscan muse,
 I ne'er could deem it but the tuneful lays
 Of him, sweet bard ! who sang his Laura's praise,
 Did not thy strains a nobler rage command,
 Fired by thy native tongue, free as thy native land.

IMPROMPTU TO MRS. OPIE,

On her saying she had never, till that evening, heard the author's name.

Ah ! vain delusion—as a poet
 To think I shared some little fame,
 Yet find not e'en the *muses* know it,
 For Opie never heard my name.

TO A LADY,

On her presenting the author with a couple of purses; one of which she said might serve for a card-purse.

Since ne'er at cards, or luck, or skill,
 With others' wealth my purse shall fill ;
 And *one* might, to an envious spirit,
 Seem more than what I need or merit ;
 Know, lovely maid ! that *either* purse
 May prove a *blessing*, not a *curse*,
 (For justly is the wretch accused,
 By whom Heaven's gifts are wrongly used,) *One*
 I'll to Industry consign ;
 For only what I *gain* is *mine* ;
 The *other* Charity shall hold ;
 To bless the poor, the sick, the old.
 And thus I'll think the donor fair
 Scorns not my honest toils to share,
 And joins me in such deeds of love
 As claim the aid of Heaven above.

* His house, in Scotland-yard, Westminster, had a most delightful view of the Thames.

SONG,

Composed whilst riding over Dartmoor, 1st Oct. 1810.

England, shielded by her laws,
True to freedom's righteous cause,
Now the sword, vindictive draws
For others.

On every shore that ocean laves,
To Britons, rulers of the waves,
They who scorn to rank as slaves
Are brothers.

Fired by valour's quenchless flame,
England, conscious that her name
Bright shall ever shine with fame
In story ;

Calls the trembling nations round,
Roused from apathy profound,
To share, through all the world renown'd,
Her glory.

England ! blest with liberty,
Nations, like thyself, to free—
This has been, and e'er shall be,
Thy charter.

Dangers ne'er thy breast appal ;
Should the foe the world enthral,
Thou the very last wilt fall—
A martyr.

But no !—His pride shall soon abate—
The tyrant's bloody thread, though late,
Th' impending shears of angry Fate
Shall sever.

Yes !—nor think my words are vain,
When joined by this prophetic strain—
England's freedom shall remain
For ever !

LINES

On the Jubilee, 1809.

Whilst mid the night that shadows half the world,
From untrack'd orbits meteor stars are hurl'd ;

O'er hapless Gallia, haughty mid her woes,
 Whilst the fell comet, red with fury glows ;
 Thy planet, GEORGE ! with calm but steady force,
 Rolls through screener skies its lengthened course :
 And, by her guardian Genius firmly led,
 Shall long o'er Albion happiest influence shed.

Time, in his endless circle, where, for signs,
 Each solar zodiac, ranged as annals shines,
 Bends back, and points to seven sabbatic spheres,
 That mark the gradual lapse of grateful years
 Since a loved monarch graced a splendid throne,
 And ruled a people justly call'd his own.

Joy, too, descends from Heaven on seraph wing,
 And bids whole nations wake the choral string ;
 In grateful concert to resound his praise,
 As full of virtues, as he's full of days.
 Long may he reign ! kind Heaven's peculiar care ;
 A boon conceded to his country's prayer ;
 Till, deathless still to honour and renown,
 He quit an earthly for a heavenly crown.

TO A LADY,

*Who insisted that the author should give her his reasons for not playing
 at cards.*

First, then, I fear (I own 'tis true)
 When for my Sociate's heart I sue,
 Like Omphale* of old renown,
 She'll raise her club, and knock me down.
 Nor e'er my anger can I smother
 To see, perhaps, some worthless other
 That heart I hold above all price
 Win with a diamond in a trice.
 Rather than this, I'd yield my breath,
 And supplicate the spade of death,

* The Lydian queen dressed in her lover's lion's skin, and armed with his club, is said to have kept Hercules in due subjection to a government, now well known, but which then perhaps had not received a name.

Me from such torturing pangs to save
 As gamesters know, to dig my grave—
 Where *kings* and *queens* (for all must die)
 And *knaves* and fools together lie.

TO A LADY,

Who procured some wine for the author at a crowded supper, by requesting it for herself.

As with a bolder wing, the bird of Jove
 Bears the red lightning through the realms above,
 When seated with the rich nectareous tide,
 By Hebe, from the golden vase supplied.

So, when from thee, than Hebe's self more fair,
 'Tis mine the cup, thy lips have kiss'd, to share,
 Warm'd by the draught, my muse should wing her flight,
 And strive to win Parnassus' loftiest height,
 And thence, sweet maid! in never dying lays,
 Recount thy beauties, and resound thy praise:
 But no!—she dares not hope, with feeble wing,
 To brush the spray from famed Castalia's spring.

Since vain the contest with the bird of Jove,
 Oh! may she rival Cytherea's dove;
 Content to soar, though still with conscious dread,
 In giddy circles o'er thy rose-crown'd head;
 In hopes thy pitying lips will bid her rest
 With trembling pinions on thy downy breast.
Temple, 1806.

TO A LADY,

*Whom, on her telling the author that she had heard of the poetical effusions he had presented to the Hon. Anna * * *, he assured that they were principally written to remove an impression she had formed, from his silence and reserve, that he was little better than a fool. Her reply, that his looks alone should have satisfied her of the mistake, gave rise to the present Impromptu.*

Whene'er I join the social train,
 A young and inexperienced swain,
 My silence and embarrass'd air
 They think my ignorance declare.

But thou, who seest with partial eyes,
 Bidd'st me their envious taunts despise ;
 For, if my lips were ne'er to move,
 My looks their malice would disprove.

But though, my fair! thy tongue makes known
 The dictates of thy heart alone,
 My breast, with gratitude inspired,
 Shall ne'er with vanity be fired.
 No—if each feature of my face
 Seem'd fraught with animated grace,
 And silently bespoke my mind
 By nature and by art refined ;
 'Twas that my eyes reflected *thine*,
 That bright as love's fair planet shine ;
 'Twas that, by sympathy possess'd,
 On mine *thy* features were impress'd ;
 And if like *thee* I look'd and moved,
 Oh ! tell me—could I be but loved ?
 1805.

TO A LADY,

On altering for the author a pair of legal into clerical bands.

The breast-plate that on Aaron shone
 Begemm'd with many a mystic stone,
 Could by its varying rays declare
 If God had heard the suppliant's prayer.

Now, when the law's high pomp is o'er,
 And all her splendours are no more ;
 The Gospel's humbler heart's express'd,
 By lowly bands and simple vest.

Since then, sweet maid ! thy skilful hands
 Have clipp'd the *lawyer's* ampler bands,
 To suit the *deacon's* humbler guise ;
 Oh ! may they prove to wondering eyes
 I've quenched ambition's meteor fire,
 Nor glow with fame or wealth's desire,

And, spurning all the pride of art,
May soft persuasion from the heart
Inspire my tongue, by praise or blame,
To rouse devotion's purer flame !
1811.

TO A LADY.

Sir Sydney Smith, who, together with the author, was on a visit with a friend at Hampton, in order to give us an idea of the oriental costume, bound a shawl round the head of the young lady to whom these lines are addressed, in the form of a turban ; and, saying that it only remained for him to apply a little rouge to her cheek, saluted her.

Blush not, sweet maid ! around thy head
When Albion's boast and Gallia's dread,—
Whose looks alone from Acre's wall
Could e'en her proudest chief appal,—
With conquering hand the fillet winds,
Around thy brow the turban binds,
And steals his fair reward—a kiss :
For who would rob him of the bliss ?

No—greet him with thy country's vows,
Weave laurel for the victor's brows,
And if he smile upon thy charms,
Blush not to clasp him in thine arms.
For who so justly claims to prove
The ardour of his country's love ?
And who that ardour can declare
So well, so warmly, as the fair ? *

* To the above little poem is attached the following note:—

"I hope," says Mr. Bray, "I may be pardoned for mentioning the following circumstance, as it is intimately connected with the preceding verses:—Sir Sydney Smith, who was on the point of taking leave of the company, requested to have a copy of what he was pleased to call his *charter*; and the lady, on my promising to give her another, presented him with the original. On fulfilling my promise, she put it in her bosom; and afterwards we made a morning's excursion, in my friend's barouche, to Richmond. On our return, however, she lamented that she had lost it, and petitioned for another copy. I soon supplied her loss; and, on speculating as to what might become of the Sibyl's leaf, I felt some consolation in reflecting, that

SONG.

Ah ! credit not the rival swain,
 Who whispers in thy jealous ear,
 That other maids my vows obtain,
 And calls my passion insincere.

I own, dear maid ! I love to seek
 The plain where sport the virgin choir ;
 And oft the form, the blushing cheek,
 The charms of many a fair, admire.

But, though each love-inspiring dame
 Mine eye with earnest gaze surveys,
 Ah ! cease, my love ! thy swain to blame,
 Because he gives each beauty praise.

By blending every virgin's grace,
 A something like thyself I see ;
 For all the charms of every face
 Are surely, Rosa ! seen in thee.

SONG.

Though, Delia, on the flow'ry mead,
 With thee the sportive dance I lead,
 View not the virgins with disdain
 Who for a partner sigh in vain.

Though oft with truth thou hear'st me swear
 Thine eyes are bright, thy face is fair ;
 Oh ! think not Love has thrown his dart,
 And pierced for thee my thrilling heart.

though the person who might find it would easily discover that it alluded to Sir Sydney, he would be unable to divine to whom it was addressed. Immediately on leaving Hampton, I set off with a friend on a tour through South Wales ; and was not a little surprised when he told me that a few days before he had dined with a party at Richmond ; and on the health of Sir Sydney, with that of other public characters, being drunk at table, a gentleman who was present said that his son, a little boy, whilst at play, had lately found a copy of verses respecting him, which he produced. My friend said he was convinced he knew the author ; and, taking one of my letters relative to our intended journey from his pocket, asked him if he did not recognise the writing."

For I from fair to fair resort,
And pay to each my amorous court,
In hopes at last a maid to find,
The best, the fairest of her kind.

Thus from the hive the insect flies,
And soars o'er flowers of thousand dyes :
But, when the sweetest strikes his view,
He shuts its wings, and sips its dew.

Sir Sydney Smith was a frequent visiter at the villa of Mr. Bray's friend at Hampton, on the banks of the Thames. During these visits Sir Sydney told many anecdotes of his being confined in the Temple at Paris.

Whilst a prisoner there, he carried on some secret communication with his friends, who were desirous of assisting his escape. Sometimes by blowing a particular air on the flute, they were given to understand that they were to work, or not to work, in a subterranean passage which they were forming for his liberation, as their labours demanded the utmost circumspection, lest they should be overheard by their enemies. Sir Sydney, when permitted to be in the court-yard of the prison for exercise, occasionally amused himself with a game of balls, somewhat similar to that of fives. His aim was to keep up as many as he could; and when the eye of the sentinel was elsewhere engaged, to glance one of the balls, in which was concealed a paper of instructions, over the wall to his friends. The governor, who was his keeper, had so firm a confidence in his honour that, when he was obliged to leave the Temple, he would most earnestly beseech Sir Sydney to be on his parole; and if he consented would, during his absence, give him full liberty to range within the walls of his prison. But if, through caprice or design, Sir

Sydney did not agree to pass his word, (and he not unfrequently refused it,) the governor seemed greatly disconcerted, and, he had reason to believe, now and then remained on purpose to watch, instead of following his intention of quitting guard for awhile.

Though for five years Mr. Bray went the western circuit, and bore a very fair reputation in his vocation, yet he never liked the law as a profession; and never could overcome his timidity as a barrister. This was put to a singular trial in the very first witness he had to examine in the Court at Exeter; for she proved to be one of his father's old servants; and he had a very painful duty to perform in his professional capacity, in preventing her from criminating her husband.

During the circuits he formed many pleasant acquaintances; and one of his legal companions and friends in these circuits, and who was once also a guest at his father's in Tavistock, was the late Speaker of the House of Commons, the Honourable Sir Charles Manners Sutton*. For the public principles and integrity of this gentleman, Mr. Bray always entertained the utmost respect and esteem; and the days he passed with him in their professional career he numbers now as amongst the most agreeable recollections of his youth.

I have been told by my husband's old legal friends, that among them he obtained the name of the *Castilian*, on account of the high feelings of honour he invariably observed in his profession. From mistrust in his own powers, he may be said to have avoided a brief as much as others sought one.

Nevertheless, it is but justice due to him to say

* Now Lord Canterbury.

that in three cases of more than ordinary import, though each differing in its nature from the other, he gave the fullest satisfaction ; these cases related, first, to an opinion on a will, in which the right to some very considerable property was involved ; secondly, to a consultation ; and thirdly, to an award. The consultation was held at Mr. Garrow's chambers, where my husband, as a young man, listened with great attention, but did not venture to offer any remarks ; but, on his return with one of the barristers, who was his most intimate friend, he said that he could not reconcile himself to the conclusion they had come to, as it was at variance with a case which he then mentioned ; and pointed out what he thought would be the right course. His friend naturally enough asked him why he did not mention it at the time ; and said he should instantly, on reaching his chambers, write to Mr. Garrow on the subject, and tell him to whom he was indebted for the opinion, which would probably alter the whole aspect of the case ; as indeed it did.

My husband's opinion on the doubtful point of the will was confirmed by the highest authority ; and the award, very unusual in such cases, gave satisfaction to both parties.

But however much respected he might be as a barrister, yet such was his aversion to the courts of law, that I have heard him say he never put on a wig and gown to attend Westminster Hall without a painful disturbance of the nerves. And that extreme degree of timidity, which he could never overcome, frequently made him remain silent, or rendered his expressions confused, when he knew his own views to be right respecting the subject in dis-

cussion. Yet, when his feelings were strongly interested or excited, he was fully the master of himself; and in such moments, I have been assured by those who have heard him in court, he both commanded and fixed attention in a very remarkable degree.

His own inclinations, however, were always turned on the Church; and even whilst in the Temple he studied sedulously those old divines in whose works he so much delighted. In town he also attended the lectures of Dr. Porteus, Bishop of London; and gave the heads of every lecture, in a series of letters, to a friend in the country; who, not long since, assured me he had for many years carefully preserved them, till he lent them to some clergyman in Cornwall, who took so great an interest in their perusal as never to return them.

Mr. Bray was not altogether unskilled in points of controversy even at this period; for Dr. Disney, the Unitarian minister (who had originally held preferment in the Church), gave him the Unitarian and improved (as it is called) version of the New Testament, with a view to induce him to embrace his own sentiments; but so far was this from producing the effect, it confirmed him in his former opinions; and not content with refuting many of its principles in notes on the margin, he resolved more sedulously to study the scriptures themselves than he had ever done before; and by the blessing of God, he considers this was no small means of bringing him to the decision of entering the Church as a profession. The circumstance of his ordination was not a little remarkable: I shall here, therefore, relate it.

His fondness for Italian literature, as was before

noticed, procured for him the acquaintance and friendship of Mr. Mathias. When he resolved to quit the bar for the Church, previous to executing his intention of going to one of the universities, he secluded himself from the society of his friends, in order to apply closely to the more direct study of theology.

It was necessary, however, for his health, that he should occasionally take exercise ; and in one of his walks he accidentally met Mr. Mathias, who inquired what he had lately done with himself. Mr. Bray explained the object and motive of his seclusion.

On hearing this, Mr. Mathias was pleased to say, that it was a pity a man of his abilities and acquirements should lose so much time in the mere form of keeping terms at a university ; that he thought he could be of service to him ; for though he had never asked a favour for himself in his life, yet he considered his friend so peculiarly circumstanced, that he would do it for him in this instance. He was, he added, well acquainted with two or three of the Bishops ; he would mention Mr. Bray's case ; and if one would not ordain him perhaps another might ; as he knew, whatever might be the learning, or the general capabilities of the individual, that some had tied up their hands not to ordain any one who had not *previously* taken a degree.

Mr. Mathias, like a true friend, as he was, fulfilled his word ; and Mr. Bray soon received a letter from him, stating that he had held some communication with the Bishop of Norwich, who said, that if he (Mathias) would bring his friend to him, and he found him competent to fill the office of the ministry,

he was happy to say he had not tied up his hands, as some of his brother bishops had done, and that he should be willing to ordain him; for he had always considered that a person who entered the Church on choice, the result of mature reflection, would be more likely to be an honour to it than where he was destined to the sacred profession at an early age merely to take advantage of the interest of friends.

Mr. Bray, on a personal acquaintance, had the good fortune fully to satisfy the Bishop. He afterwards, also, was received with great kindness at Norwich; and, in consequence of the absence of the chaplain, was examined by the chancellor. He was ordained, in the ordinary course, in the cathedral of that city.

Soon after this event he proceeded to Tavistock, on a visit to his father and mother. He had scarcely been there a few weeks, when the Rev. Richard Sleeman, Vicar of Tavistock, and perpetual curate of Brent Tor, died. At this time Mr. Adam (now Baron Adam, and Lord High Commissioner of Scotland) was on a visit at the house of my husband's father. This gentleman very kindly seconded Mr. Bray, sen., in his application to his Grace the present Duke of Bedford, who immediately named the object of their solicitude to the vacant preferment, in the year 1811. Thus, after so many changes of fortune, Mr. Bray found himself at last in his native town, with his nearest and dearest friends, in the neighbourhood of his favourite Dartmoor; and established as a minister in that church on which he had always fixed his desires and his hopes: and most thankful has he ever felt for the blessing so peculiarly, though

so late, conferred on him in his choice of a profession. He was indeed most forcibly reminded of the vicissitudes of his life when, on going to Brent Tor, the first time he ever did duty, he met in his way thither one of his old artillery-men, who very cordially saluted him with "How do you do, *Captain*?" adding the old proverb, "Once a captain, always a captain."

Not unmindful of his former pursuits, even in a new profession, Mr. Bray still bore in mind his wish one day to give some account of his native town and its vicinity. For this purpose he kept a slight journal of his excursions, and made many pencil sketches during his walks and rides; whilst the first year that he was Rural Dean, he made a drawing of every church he visited; in some instances combining the landscape with the building. This series much interested Mr. Stothard, the historical painter, to whom they were shown in London; and who said, that if engraved, they would make a very good work, as picturesque examples of the architecture which chiefly prevailed in this part of England.

Of Mr. Bray's life as a clergyman, I must not speak; since, in giving him a place (which I could not omit without the greatest injustice) in the biography of his native town, it has been my aim to state a few facts connected with him as simply as possible, withholding all commendation of my own, that I might not even seem to name them with the slightest degree of favourable prejudice or partiality. The friends he has found and preserved through life, and the respect and affection of the worthy, both rich and poor, in his own parish, are all I ask to speak his praise; he does not need mine.

I must, however, add, that diffident of his own powers, and anxious that his flock should have the benefit of those old divines from whose stores he had himself derived so much knowledge and instruction, he determined to commence his career, not by giving them his own crude compositions, nor yet mere transcriptions from others, however excellent they might be: for some years, therefore, he compressed and modernized a vast number of those old and sterling writers whose works, though known but to students, will ever remain as monuments of honour to the Church, and to the country that gave them birth. Delighted with this pursuit, he determined to go still farther, and both studied and translated in a manner capable of being delivered from the pulpit, the most eloquent and orthodox portions of the Greek and Latin Fathers.

Of original sermons, Mr. Bray has a very considerable collection; though he did not venture on the composition of these till he had long studied in the school of those great examples above mentioned. He has published, besides the poems already alluded to, 'Sermons selected from the works of the most eminent Divines of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries; abridged, and rendered in a modern and appropriate style.'

'Discourses adapted to the Pulpit, or to the use of Families, from Tracts and Treatises of eminent Divines.'

'Select Sermons of the Right Reverend Thomas Wilson, D.D., Bishop of Sodor and Man: abridged, and rendered in a familiar but less colloquial style.'

'Lyric Hymns,' published 1820.

The following songs printed (not published) in

1821 :—‘Idyls,’ part the first ; ‘Funeral Ode on the Death of Lord Nelson.’

‘Look before you Leap ; or, Caution Recommended in deciding on the Claims of the Roman Catholics, by Anti-Romanus.’

‘Discourses on Protestantism, as a Fundamental and Pervading Principle in Church and State.’

These last named sermons are original ; they were delivered by Mr. Bray in the church of Tavistock, in the year 1829, and published at the request of many of his most respectable parishioners.

‘A Sermon, preached at the Visitation of the Ven. the Archdeacon of Totnes, in the Parish Church of Tavistock, on Thursday, June 20th, 1833, and printed at the request of some of the clergy present.’

I ought to have mentioned that Mr. Bray contributed to the ‘Classical Journal’ some papers on the Classic Metres ; and to another periodical, whose name I have forgotten, some communications on the Italian Sonnet.

At the particular request of his Grace the Duke of Bedford, my husband took on himself, though much against his own inclinations, the duties of a magistrate, in the year 1812. Thinking himself, therefore, entitled to something like superannuation, after serving his Majesty in this capacity for more than twenty years, he now avails himself of the assistance of some of his friends, and seldom takes his seat in the Guildhall of our town.

In 1822, after keeping the regular terms, &c., as a ten years’ man, Mr. Bray took his degree as *Bachelor of Divinity* of Trinity College, Cambridge.

I shall conclude this account of my husband with a slight mention of his '*Lyric Hymns*,' "printed, but never in any way advertised, nor circulated, excepting amongst friends, in the year 1820. Of these poems (to which, from the greater variety of metre than is usual in such compositions, it is presumed that music might more easily be adapted,) those marked with an asterisk in the table of contents, were (he tells us in the preface) suggested by passages in the works of some old divines." The following paragraph I also venture to extract from the preface to this my favourite little volume:—"He may be excused, perhaps, for adding, that the first three hymns are contained in a volume of poems published by the author in 1799; and that *the whole* were sent to a London bookseller in 1817, but, owing to certain circumstances, were not then printed. And this he more particularly mentions, lest he might be supposed to have borrowed the hymn entitled '*Life*,' from a passage in '*Human Life*,' a poem published by Mr. Rogers in 1819. He hopes, therefore, to be pardoned, in the present instance, by referring to Bossuet* for the *subject* of the hymn in question."

As a proof, however, that when borrowing a subject from a prose writer, as a hint for verse, Mr. Bray is no servile translator, I shall give, at full length, his hymn of '*Life*.'

LYRIC HYMNS.

LIFE.

Life's like a road whose farthest bound
Ends in a precipice profound,

* Abrégé d'un Sermon prêché à Meaux le jour de Pâques. Phil. iv. 4.

And, ere its unknown length we range,
The danger we're forwarn'd to heed.
But, such the law that knows no change,
We may not pause, we *must* proceed.
Fain would we backward turn with fear,
But "Forward! Forward!" meets our ear.

Unseen, but not unfelt, a hand,
Not all our efforts can withstand,
Now drags us up some rocky steep,
To gaze the dizzy scene below;
Now, in some valley's shadowy deep,
Urges the viewless path of woe.
"Let rest our weary limbs restore!"
No—"Forward!" thunders as before.

Yet, to console us, still remains
Some short-lived pleasure 'mid our pains.
Glittering with morning's orient beam,
Here laugh the dew-besprinkled flowers;
There winds, through groves, the murmuring stream,
Whilst birds flit warbling 'mid their bowers.
"Oh! sure we here awhile may stay!"
Ah! no—'tis "Forward! haste! away!"

But see, behind, where'er we pass,
Falls with dread crash the crumbling mass.
And yet, because 'tis ours to wear
A fading garland wove in haste,
Because some tempting fruits we share,
Short though their savour to the taste;
In mirth a few charm'd hours we spend,
Nor heed to what our footsteps tend.

Still hurried on, 'mid fancied bliss,
Our steps approach the dread abyss.
And now, alas! how changed the scene!
The birds are mute within their bowers,
The streams less clear, the meads less green,
Less sweet the fruits, less fresh the flowers.
Death hovers o'er the gulf, and Fear:
And now we feel that we are near.

A step, and we are on the brink:
"Forward!" Ah! yes, 'tis vain to shrink.

Horror thru' all our senses flies ;
 A dizzy vapour loads our head,
 And presses on our straining eyes.
 'Tis vain our backward path to tread ;
 The path itself is now no more—
 All fallen and vanish'd—all is o'er !

HYMN.

The Sun.

Mark how the subject flowers obey
 The motions of the orb of day ;
 As tho' they could, or would, not flourish
 Without his beams their life to nourish :
 They shut, at eve, each dewy leaf,
 And hang their heads all pale with grief.

But, soon as orient morning glows,
 We see each leaf its folds uncloze,
 Tho' still in part its charms disguising
 As tho' to hail its welcome rising.
 Whilst, for his noontide blessing shed,
 Those grateful charms are wide dispread.

Thus, Lord ! but turn thy face away,
 The heart to sorrow falls a prey ;
 Whilst, in thy presence, without measure
 Flows the full flood of heavenly pleasure.
 Oh ! be it mine the world to shun,
 Of every carnal heart the sun.

When *that* or gives or hides its beams,
 Its joys or sorrows are but dreams :
 Yes, vain are *those* your heart to cherish,
 And yield to *these*, for aye you perish ;
 Whilst, Sun of Righteousness ! thy ray
 Guides us to Life's eternal day.

HYMN.

Choice of Seasons.

When comes the stork from distant climes ?
 When, but at her appointed times ?

Unruled by compass or by chart,
 Borne on the pinions of the breeze,
 For foreign realms, o'er trackless seas,
 Swallows, at their fix'd hour, depart.
 And who the nightingale, sweet bird !
 E'er 'mid the heats of harvest heard ?
 Or screaming bittern call her brood,
 When wintry tempests scour the sky ?
 Close in their cells e'en silkworms lie
 Till burst the mulberry buds, their food.
 Thou, Lord ! appointed times hast given
 To every purpose under heaven.
 E'en acts indifferent, timely done,
 To good may by thy blessing turn :
 And e'en what's lawful we may mourn,
 If but untimely 'twas begun.
 But virtue, piety, and grace,
 Can ne'er be out of time or place.
 Oh ! whilst my heart is filled with Thee,
 Be mine on earth my voice to raise
 In loud hosannas to thy praise,
 Nor cease but with eternity.

HYMN.

" Use this world as not abusing it."

Some from the world to wilds have flown,
 To fix their thoughts on God alone ;
 But, ah ! too late, *themselves*, they find,
 They left, e'en as the *world*, behind.

What mortal eye, with constant gaze,
 Can dare the sun's meridian blaze ?
 If God were ever in our sight
 'Twould blind us with excess of light.

From heavenly thoughts a timely rest
 Endears them with a double zest :
 Nay, earthly blessings, by thy care,
 'Tis ours, O God ! with joy to share.

Yet earth's best joys I'd little prize,
 If long they took me from thine eyes :
 Oh ! be it mine, through them, to view,
 And, in them, to enjoy Thee too.

HYMN.

Growth in Grace.

We form our wishes, and fulfil
 (Such our vain boast!) the self-same hour:
 Whilst God, who needs but speak his will,
 Takes time to execute his power.

The gard'ner sows the rarest seed,
 That slow its tender leaves unfolds;
 And, scarce distinguish'd from a weed,
 The eye the future flower beholds.

At length, matured by suns and showers,
 By spring's cold blasts and summer's heats,
 She peers above her rival flowers,
 Vanquish'd by her superior sweets.

Can I, then, hope the seeds of grace,
 That in my heart have fixed their root,
 (So poor the soil, so close the space,)
 With instant growth shall yield their fruit?

Be as Thou wilt thy blessings given;
 Gladly, O God! I wait thy leisure:
 So that Thou bring my soul to heaven,
 The way, the hour, be at thy pleasure.

HYMN.

The Condemned Criminal.

Just and righteous is my sentence;
 Certain death awaits my crime:
 Gracious God! be mine repentance
 Whilst I've still the gift of time.
 For, as man his life has ended,
 So is fixed his final doom:
 Justice, here with mercy blended,
 Flows unmixed beyond the tomb.

My body is my real prison;
 My sins, Ah! they're my real chains;
 Thou that from the grave art risen,
 Thou alone canst ease my pains:

Thou, a sinful world redeeming,
Oh! for me the ransom pay;
And thy blood, in mercy streaming,
Wash each deadly stain away.

But, thy fears, ah! why dissemble,
Why, my soul! so near the grave,
When the good, though aided, tremble
'Mid their work themselves to save?
Jesus! so I 'scape perdition,
Let me thy full vengeance share;
Tortured now with just contrition,
Bid thy hand hereafter spare.

HYMN.

Uncertainty of Life.

Thro' eve's thick shades that veil the sky,
No moon, no star can dart its rays:
But still the Lord's all-seeing eye
Our every thought and deed surveys.

Our limbs from labour to repose,
We welcome the return of night;
Tho' vain our hopes and fears, who knows
If e'er we hail to-morrow's light?

To God, then, let us humbly pray,
That we each fleeting hour may spend
As if, with the decline of day,
Our lives should likewise have an end.

HYMN.

Divine Power.

"Be light!"—Light was: no sooner heard
Than done, O God, thy sovereign word.
Chaos, 'mid his wild commotion,
Hush'd to peace, thy will obey'd;
Within his limits sunk the ocean,
And earth her bulwarks round array'd.

Oh! by thy mighty power controul
The raging tumults of my soul.

Let not doubts my passions darken,
Plunged in sin's o'erwhelming night :
But bid them to thy mandates hearken,
And walk by Truth's supernal light.

Then (thy grace alone can save
The prey of Death and of the Grave),
Rescued from those dread dominions,
Where the gnawing worm ne'er dies,
Shall angels bear me on their pinions
Before thy throne above the skies.

HYMN.

Interchange of Conditions.

Unchangeable Thyself, yet man
(Though life, O God ! is but a span)
Thou'st subjected within its range
To many a sad but gracious change.

Unmingled pleasure soon would cloy,
Whilst suffering gives a zest to joy :
The heart, too swoll'n with prosperous pride,
Would wholly in itself confide.

If, in the hottest of the fight,
We faint and almost turn for flight,
Thy Spirit frees us from alarm,
And prompts the vengeance of our arm.

And if, victorious in the field,
Not, Lord, to Thee ! our sword and shield,
But to ourselves we think 'tis due ;
In chains our insolence we rue.

Oh ! be not then dismay'd, my soul !
Beneath affliction's dread control ;
Since, canst thou but the storm outride,
Thy keel in calmest course shall glide.

Nor, if thou'rt blest with prosperous gales,
Let vanity inflate thy sails ;
Since sudden whirlwinds round may roar,
And wreck thee on the wish'd-for shore.

HYMN.

For Good Friday.

See ! for sinful man's transgression
 Hell's dread triumph, Heaven's depression,
 Jesus, his great work now ended,
 (Oh, what love ! that our Creator
 Should assume our wretched nature !)
 Jesus on the cross extended.

Those hands, that Heaven's bright sceptre wielded,
 To weakest rebels calmly yielded :

Those brows, but late with glory beaming,
 Crown'd with sharp thorns now droop and languish ;
 And, furrow'd by his dying anguish,
 Adown his cheeks the blood is streaming.

See ! thro' those feet the nails are driven
 That trod the starry floor of heaven ;
 And hark ! how peals the rolling thunder !
 Earth trembles, whilst the skies o'erclouded,
 The sun's in pitchy darkness shrouded ;
 All nature shrinks with fear and wonder.

The sea lays bare her deepest fountains,
 The valleys swell, the sinking mountains
 E'en to their very base are shaken ;
 Whilst at Heaven's call, by holy sages,
 Who in the tomb have slept for ages,
 Is many a hallow'd grave forsaken.

And, is it man's last hopeless ruin ?
 Oh, no—it is his blest renewing ;
 For death 'tis Victory's now to swallow.
 Christ dies, but then is most victorious :
 His course to heaven is then more glorious,
 And we our Saviour's steps shall follow.

Having given you these few hymns, &c. from a very numerous collection of Mr. Bray's poetical compositions, I here conclude, for the present, assuring you how much

I am, my dear Sir,

Very faithfully yours,

ANNA E. BRAY.

LETTER XXXIX.

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQ.

CONTENTS:—Account of a remarkable boy, John Winter—His extraordinary genius for mechanics—His parents—Birth—Only seven years old when he made his first piece of mechanism—His second attempt at nine years of age—His anchor shop model—Its machinery—Brought to great perfection—Completed at thirteen—His last and most remarkable discovery, an improvement on the parallel motion of the steam-engine—His age, character, powers of mind, &c.. described—Mr. Edmund Pearse, surgeon of Tavistock—His collection of minerals—Specimens resembling the pointed or Gothic arch—Unique—Letter from Mr. Pearse to Mrs. Bray on the mines, and anecdotes of mining in the neighbourhood.

Vicarage, Tavistock, October 5, 1835.

MY DEAR SIR,

I HAVE recently become acquainted with a boy who is of this place, and so remarkable that I hasten to give you some account of him. He possesses an extraordinary genius for mechanics; a genius which, if brought forward and encouraged, would not fail to be rendered alike beneficial to himself and to society.

His name is John Winter. He is the son of a poor man, who was a wheelwright at Morwel-ham in this parish. Soon after his birth, his father becoming foreman to the iron foundry at Tavistock, the child was removed thither by his parents, and sent to a little school to learn to read and write. In

this he took no pleasure ; to use his own words, he is "no scholar," and whilst pursuing these rudiments in his infant years, his hours hung so heavy on his hands, that he used to wish school over, that he might be at home to employ his leisure in making his machinery ; that was all his delight. The first piece of mechanism he made, which I have seen, was the model of a *shingle mill* for beating out scrap iron. When he executed this he was only *seven* years old. His father expressed himself pleased with this early attempt, and told him to go on to something of more consequence.

His next performance was the model of a *plating mill* for making shovels, which, as well as the former, he copied from the foundery. In the *plating mill* he succeeded in giving action to all the figures in a most remarkable manner. Two men are seen at the hammer making shovels, and two others rolling bars of iron. A man is introduced looking into a furnace to see if it is of a proper degree of heat, &c. He next shuts the door, and looks round to the men to ascertain if they are ready for the bar after it had been heated. Another workman is busied in paring the shovels with hand-shears. Each portion of this model performs its part by unseen machinery. John Winter was but *nine* years old when he completed it : a task truly wonderful for such a child ; the mechanism of the whole being entirely *his own invention*.

His next effort, which cost him three years' labour during his leisure hours, was a model on a yet more extensive scale. It represents what he calls an *anchor shop*. Every portion of this work seems to have attained an extraordinary degree of perfection. Four men are at work upon an anchor, which they

strike in every part ; and two others are engaged in making the stem of a second anchor. A party of strangers are arrived to see the works ; and a clerk comes out of his office, accosts them, and afterwards returns. A forge carpenter is very busily engaged, and a boy, with a begging cap in his hand, solicits contributions from the visitants. The figures thus briefly noticed are really good, and were both designed, modelled, and put in action by young Winter ; but he got his little sister to make their dresses, and the son of a barber in the town supplied the clerk with a wig. Not the least wonder of this work is seen by examining the machinery which is affixed to the under part of the top of the table on which the figures, forges, &c., are seen in due order and motion. Contrary to all clock work, there is no noise of wheels, &c., the noise heard being the hammering of the puppets on the anchors, in exact imitation of the sounds, in time and stroke, of those heard in an iron foundery. Winter finished this piece of mechanism when he was in his thirteenth year.

But his greatest, and from what I hear, his most useful work, is his improvement on the *steam engine*. He showed us the model of it. He considers that he has discovered a mode of regulating parallel motion in this engine. He first executed a model of his plan in wood, and finding it answer, he is now completing one in brass. He is at this time in his seventeenth year.

You may suppose the interest which the works of this remarkable youth have excited in us. We have had him with us at the vicarage, where he gave us a most modest account of himself and of his schemes. On inquiry, Mr. Bray found that he had seen but

few models of clock work, and in these he had never seen the machinery which set them in motion. He has often, he told us, laid awake in his bed thinking of his machinery; and in bed he generally invented all the complex movements of his works. But he could never follow up the train of his ideas after daylight appeared. We were greatly pleased with him: his countenance is open, agreeable, and strongly marked about the brows with the characteristics of genius. To see him without feeling an interest for him is impossible; and this is increased by his intelligence and his naturally good manners. He is altogether a very fine youth.

I must now turn to another subject of considerable interest, and one that I have great pleasure in introducing to your notice: the minerals, and anecdotes connected with mining of this neighbourhood. Mr. Edmund Pearse, surgeon of Tavistock, has been kind enough to indulge me with a sight of his beautiful museum (for such it may be called) of native and local minerals. Amongst these are specimens of a singular formation, resembling the pointed or Gothic arch, with mathematical exactness; these minerals have only been found in one mine that is in this neighbourhood. All mineralogists have pronounced them to be unique. The following letter, which I doubt not will interest you as much as it has ourselves, is from the pen of Mr. Pearse:—

“ TO MRS. BRAY.

“ *Tavistock, October 2, 1835.*

“ MADAM,

“ It would afford me pleasure to furnish you with a statement of such particulars as you require relative to the mines and miners of our neighbour-

hood ; but the very limited stock of information I possess on the subject, and the fact of my not being versed either in mineralogy or geological science, renders me rather an incompetent person to supply the required materials. However, I will furnish you with a brief sketch of some facts which I have been able to collect at different periods from my occasional intercourse with the miners and the mines in the immediate vicinity of Tavistock. Dartmoor, it is well known, abounds with lodes of iron and tin ; several of the latter have at all periods been very productive, and many more are now likely to be worked by the Plymouth and Dartmoor Company with spirit and success. In one of these mines, near Moreton Hampstead, manganese and calcareous spar have been found inclosed in masses of solid granite at the depth of sixty fathoms ; a fact which ill accords with most of our popular geological theories. I have several specimens of this manganese in my own museum. The same mine also has produced some elegant specimens of variegated quartz, needle tin, red, yellow, black, and rose quartz ; also some splendid octohedral, pseudo-morphous crystals of a large size, sometimes inclosing a little water ; but no other vestige of the original formation, and no apparent outlet which might have given exit to the materials of the decomposed crystal, forming a beautiful subject for the speculations of the electro-chemical mineralogist.

“ The stream works, though less productive than the mines, are still, in many instances, a source of profit to the adventurer. Formerly some grains of gold were found in these streams, and it was not uncommon for the miner to carry in his pocket a quill

in which to deposit them. In and about the old stream works there are now to be seen several remains of the Phœnician smelting-houses, called by the miners Jews' Houses: from one of these, near the confluence of the east and west Dart, about three years since, there was taken tin ore, which was redressed and smelted at Crowndale, by the present Tavistock Smelting Company; and not far from this place there was found a block of Jew's tin, supposed to be the most ancient in existence, and now in the possession of a gentleman of this town. The surface of this block betrays marks of great antiquity, being much corroded by the influence of those external agents to which it has been exposed.

"I remember, about twelve years ago, to have seen a very old woodcut, which exhibited a whole pack of hounds harnessed and laden with little bags of tin, travelling over the mountains of Dartmoor; these animals being able to cross the deep bogs of the forest in situations where there were no roads, and where no other beasts of burden could pass. The old miners on the moor are rather more superstitious than those residing in towns. The horse-shoe is invariably affixed to some of the erections belonging to the mine to prevent witchcraft. The precise origin of this superstitious practice I am unable to learn; the only explanation I have heard given is, that the devil always travels in circles, and that he is consequently interrupted when he arrives at either of the heels of the shoe, and obliged to take a retrograde course.

"The miners have invariably a great horror and dread at whistling underground, believing it to be very unlucky; they regard it also as unlucky

to work either on Midsummer, or New-year's day, or on the eves of these days; and, formerly, all red-letter days were deemed sacred. On these occasions they also affix to the top of the principal engine, or building, a flag, or bush, which they call a *switch*—it is said that this was originally done to commemorate the opening of the tin trade with China.

“It is not uncommon in deep mines, where there are what the miners term vugs—or where there are large pseudomorphous crystallizations—to hear loud and frequent explosions, and that on occasions and in situations where no miners are at work: these noises the men believe to be occasioned by the working of the fairies, or pixies, whom they call *small men*; but the true cause is the bursting open of some of these crystals, hollows, and vugs, where the air or gas had been confined under very high degrees of pressure.

“A miner of this town very lately broke into one of those hollows of considerable size, of a grotto-like appearance, and richly studded with crystals of quartz and pyrites, which, by the light of his candle, had such a brilliant appearance as made the man say ‘he thought he was in heaven;’ and being asked in what respect he thought it resembled heaven’ he replied, ‘It was so beautiful, he could compare it to nothing else than to a Jew’s shop.’

“Huel Friendship, in the parish of Mary Tavy, has been for years, and is now, the richest copper-mine in this district: there has been lately erected on the mine a magnificent steam-engine, which in power may be ranked as the third in England. This mine has furnished for the cabinet of the

mineralogist specimens of *chesel spar* beautifully coloured with amethystine tints, *tongstate of lime*, *slickensides*, *pavonites*, and crystals of pyrites of various forms from the cube to the ekosihedron. I have a crystal of the latter description, whose planes are equilateral triangles highly polished, with bevelled edges.

"In the parish of Calstock, on the Cornish banks of the Tamar, *Gunnis Lake Mine* has been lately re-opened by Capt. Thomas Teage and Co. A few years since, this mine, of all others was the most productive in specimens of *uranite*, *malachite*, *arseniates*, *carbonates*, *sulphates*, and *native coppers*; also *plush copper*, resembling the richest velvet, *crimson*, *green*, and *blue*. The Beer Mines are also again at work for silver and lead, and are likely to replenish the cabinets of the curious with *tabular quartz*, *galena*, *variegated and multiformed fluors*, containing water, particles of silver, iron, lead, titanium, pyrites and copper. A polyhedral crystal of fluor from this mine is described by Phillips in his 'Introduction to Mineralogy,' page 170, as bounded by 322 planes.

"The manganese Mines in the neighbourhood of Brent Tor have furnished specimens of singular form and beauty; some perfect letters and figures, leaves, leaflets, and embossed *arborescent forms*.

"*The Virtuous Lady Mine*, situated on Roborough Down, in the parish of Buckland, immediately below the junction of the Walkham and Tavy, is the most celebrated mine in Devonshire for the variety and singularity of its cabinet specimens.

"Besides the brilliant, well-defined crystals of titanium, fishscale iron, dodecahedral and cubic

crystals of pyrites, milk and cream quartz, pavonites and tetrahedral crystals of copper, red, blue, purple, yellow and violet, it has produced specimens of copper which, when turned about under the rays of the sun, assume, or rather reflect, a different colour from every different angle of incidence,—orange, gold, crimson, violet, green, &c., &c.

“The capped quartz from this mine are among the finest in the world. I have in my collection one specimen having upwards of thirty truncated crystals, every one of which will exhibit, when the cap is removed, corresponding apices to those of the caps. But the most modern, as well as the most inexplicable of the productions of this mine, are the Gothic arches of spathose iron, which were found in great abundance in the years 1832 and 1833. Some of these arches have been shown to different mineralogists, who have offered various hypotheses relative to their formation.

“By one they were said to be depositions of spathose iron upon some implements used by the miners of a very remote period.

“Another gave it as his opinion that they were formed in the same way by depositions on a vegetable production, such as the dock-leaf, &c., and were placed in their present situation by some great convulsion of nature.

“The theory of their formation advanced by the miners themselves, is just as good as either of the above, which is, that they were moulded by the soles of the shoes of the antediluvian miners, or the shoes and feet of the *smail men*, that is, the fairies or pixies.

“Some of these arches are grooved round the edges; others are quite hollow, showing that they were moulded originally on some other substance of the arched form, which substance is, in most instances, entirely removed, but in others some calcareous matter has been found. These arches are frequently found standing on, and having their hollows communicating with, a sort of cavern, of a pseudomorphous cubic crystalline form, as if they once contained cubic crystals of fluor, or pyrites. In one of these caverns, in my possession, there is, as if precipitated at the bottom, a calcareous stalagmite, on which rests an isolated crystal of copper. About six fathoms from the situation of these arches and caverns, separated by solid rock, there was found a multitude of cubic crystals of pyrites of various magnitudes, well fitting the cubic hollows in the caverns above alluded to*.

“It is possible that at some distant period, in a great convulsion of nature, these cubes might have been shaken out of their shells, and removed six fathoms distant from them; but supposing this to have been the case, we still are as much as ever in the dark as to the formation of the Lancet Arch, which seems to have been produced with mathematical accuracy and precision.

“The truth is, we are not yet in possession of a sufficient number of facts to warrant our coming to any conclusion on the subject.

“When adverting above to the superstition of the miners, I had forgotten to relate a circumstance

* There was raised one of the arches without a base, and elongated, forming a double arch, with a smaller one lying transversely across its middle. This specimen is unique.

which occurred a few years since, near Roborough Rock. Three men were at work late on the Saturday night at the South Devon Wharf, when suddenly they saw issue from the rock a large ball of fire, which, with a rumbling noise, rolled on towards them, and in its approach assumed a variety of forms; sometimes that of a human figure, then of a church with arched windows, pillars, &c., &c. The men were dreadfully terrified, and calling to their recollection that the Sunday had commenced, they fully believed they saw, and were pursued by the devil; and this continues to be their firm conviction.

"The fact is, that it is not very uncommon for inflammable gas to issue from the back of lodes, which ignites as soon as it comes in contact with the oxygen of the atmosphere. The ground where these men were working is full of iron and tin lodes, and there can be no doubt but that their fears not only gave the name but also the form to the meteor.

"The superstition relative to the dowsing or divining rod, and the dowsers themselves, is too well known to be noticed here. The only instance that I know of its having been used in Devonshire, was at Stickelpath, near Oakhampton, about six years since, where a dowser was brought up, at a considerable expense, from the west of Cornwall, by a set of adventurers, who, notwithstanding the favourable predictions of the dowser, have found their speculation an unprofitable adventure.

"I am, Madam,

"With respect,

"Your obedient Servant,

"EDMUND PEARSE."

LETTER XL.

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQ.

CONTENTS:—Some short account of the most striking scenes and remarkable places in the vicinity of the Town—Junction of the rivers Tavy and Walkham—Called the Double Water—Grenofen a beautiful place—Raven Rock—The Valley—The Virtuous Lady—Miniature Alpine Bridge—A girl lost whilst passing it—Superstition respecting the river Tamar—Walreddon House an ancient domain, fine woods and grounds—Mount Tavy—Rowdon Wood—Park Wood—Account of an extraordinary tempest, or whirlwind, in Rowdon Wood, in 1768—Admirably described by Mr. Gullett—His description given—Ride to Ward Bridge—Most delightful scenery—Wood Town—Spenser the poet—Lines quoted from his ‘Shepherd’s Calendar’—View of Vixen Tor from the field—Remarkable effect at sunset—Excursion continued—The Pass, or entrance to the Moor—The Cursus—Spirit of a horse—A runaway racehorse stopped by Sir Wm. Trelawny in a remarkable manner—Ride to New Bridge—Magnificent scenery—The public indebted to the Duke of Bedford for a new road over the summit of the rocks—Morwel Rocks; their beauty and grandeur—Endsleigh Cottage—Seat of the Duke of Bedford—Blanch-down Woods—Denham Bridge—Village of Peter Tavy; its beauty and interest—Children and peasantry—The Coombe—Valley of Waterfalls—Brent Tor—Cudlipp Town—Mr. Bray’s Manor stands in the parish of Tavistock—excluded from the benefit of franchise by the Reform Bill—Story of a Judge and Mary Tavy and Peter Tavy—Mary Tavy scenery—The Shellands—Story of a bandit who lived in a wood, and became the terror of the country round Dunterton—Some account of the Abbots of Tavistock, by the Rev. Mr. G. Oliver of Exeter—The Author takes leave of Mr. Southey—The Conclusion.

Vicarage, Tavistock, Sept. 24th, 1833.

MY DEAR SIR,

I AM aware there ought to be in these letters some account of the most remarkable places in our

neighbourhood, in regard to the beauty of their scenery. But this is a subject on which I have little to say that would be new to you; having already, in 'Fitzford,' attempted incidentally to describe all that is most striking or worthy around us. I have there spoken at large respecting Morwel rocks, the vicinities of the Lumborne, the Tamar, and the Tavy, Lidford waterfall, the glen, and the castle, the cave and mine of the Virtuous Lady, with the enchanting scenery by which it is surrounded, &c. Nor can I help thinking, notwithstanding you have been accustomed to the grandeur of mountain and lake scenes, that you would be struck with the exceeding beauty of our rocky rivers and our valleys. I can well believe that our loftiest hills would look as mole-hills to you, when compared to those of Cumberland; but the forms of our tors, by which they are generally crowned, are of the most picturesque character, and so peculiar, that I question if any other county, excepting Cornwall, can boast similar granite pinnacles as the finish of their elevated points.

The junction of the rivers Tavy and Walkham, at a wild romantic spot called the *Double Water*, deserves notice. In its kind, it is one of the most beautiful scenes I ever beheld: so, indeed, is the whole of the valley leading to the Double Water. Near the entrance (from the Tavistock road) is situated Grenofen*, a house surrounded by delightful grounds, lawns, and trees. The Walkham winds in the most beautiful manner through the valley of Grenofen; here rushing over masses of rock, there clear as crystal, showing every pebble in

* Lately purchased by the Rev. J. P. Carpenter.

its bed, and forming at every turn little picturesque falls of water. Sometimes the stream is interrupted by larger masses, and is seen tumbling over them in a sheet of boiling foam; whilst near, in many a deep hollow, it lies still and clear, reflecting, like a mirror, every object around. The adjacent hills are lofty, often abrupt; here and there wooded or broken in their sides, presenting a surface of crag and cliff, partially covered with lichen and ivy. In these recesses the ravens make their nests; and the rocks are frequently found of the wildest forms, such as *Salvator* himself would have chosen as a suitable scene for the haunts of his banditti. The noblest of these piles is called the *Raven Rock*; no doubt from the many birds of that tribe which harbour in it. This, when seen at twilight, with the river rolling and foaming but a few yards from its base, has an effect that acts powerfully on the imagination. In the days of superstition I can well believe it might have been deemed the haunt of pixies and spirits, that make their rings in the greensward at dusk, and lead poor travellers astray, "laughing at their harms."

Passing the base of the Raven Rock, you still follow the windings of the Walkham till you arrive at the foot of a second acclivity, composed of rocks in forms the most picturesque and fantastic that can be imagined. These have of late been rendered peculiarly interesting in consequence of their having become the favourite haunt of a flock of goats. They make the scene alive; and to view them standing sometimes on the edges of the crags (where you would fancy the creatures could scarcely find footing); to see them gambol or climb from one mass to another, affords a most lively picture of animal enjoyment. The junction of the streams, which is not far

off, forming a thousand rushes of water foaming over a broken bed, the cliffs around, the trees, which in some places overhang the banks, and the opening of the magnificent vista of rock, height, river, and wood that constitute the valley, where the cave and mine of the Virtuous Lady are situated, present altogether such a scene as the pencil alone could attempt to portray, so as to give any distinct idea of its character.

When our friend Mr. Harding, the landscape artist, was here, Mr. Bray set off to guide him to the Virtuous Lady; but Harding, who, like most men of genius, is a great enthusiast, was so enchanted with the scenery through which he had to pass in his way thither, that he could never get to the place of destination; and he sat down near the Goat Rock (as we call it), took out his pencil, and I saw no more of Mr. Bray and his guest till they were driven home by the approach of evening*.

There is a miniature alpine bridge that crosses the Walkham at its junction with the Tavy, near the spot just named; this consists of a single plank, with a light piece of wood extended as a hand-rail to hold by in passing. In one part the plank is supported by a *clutter* of rocks beneath, as a Devonian would say in describing it. To stop on the middle of this plank and look around, will afford the greatest delight to the lover of the picturesque; but let him beware his head does not turn giddy, for though he would have but a very few feet to fall, such is the tre-

* That most worthy man and meritorious artist, Mr. Lewis, has made some beautiful drawings in this neighbourhood from nature. And one of the finest landscapes of modern times, a view on the Tavy, was painted by him in oil, from his own sketch, and purchased by the Duke of Bedford, who gave it to Mr. Wilson, the gentleman who manages his property at Tavistock.

mendous force of the current in this place, he would be instantly whirled down like a snow-flake, should the waters be at all full, as they always are after recent rains or sudden heavy showers. A poor girl was lost off this bridge not long ago, in crossing it to go to church. A farmer, also, who had been carried down the stream, was found drowned; and many thought he had fallen, perhaps, into the river from this plank; the railing is only on one side; it is altogether very dangerous.

The last time we visited this fairy scene was at noon-day; an hour that makes even cowards bold, especially when the sun is shining out cheerfully, and, like an alchymist, very liberally turning every thing into gold. Such at least was the effect I that day witnessed; every object, even the lightest cloud, wore a bright yellow hue. Not afraid of falling, as the plank was quite dry, I stopped half way in crossing to enjoy the scene around me. Such was the roar of the water, for the stream was very full, that I could not hear a word Mr. Bray said, as he stood calling to me from the bank only a few paces distant. After looking for two or three minutes on the rocks, the rush, the foam, and the whirl of the river, I felt my head beginning to whirl too, so that I delayed not a moment to get off as fast as I could from so dangerous a footing; and I could very well understand how it might be that from time to time so many persons lose their self-possession by a similar affection of the head, and fall into the stream below, whence they are hurried on to meet death in the first deep pool into which they are borne. These bridges are called *clams*, and they are never found any where excepting across our rocky and mountain

streams. Whilst touching on the subject of drowning in rivers, I cannot forbear mentioning the superstitious legend respecting the Tamar, which is by many believed to be as true as the gospel. It is averred, then, that the river Tamar demands, and will have, the sacrifice of a human life once every year; and that if one year passes without a person being drowned in its waters, the next the river is sure to take two lives in order to make up the number.

Walreddon House, before named, a very ancient dwelling, stands not far distant from the Tavy, in the direction of the Virtuous Lady valley and cave. This house was built in the time of Edward VI., but parts of it are of a much earlier date. The present possessor, Mr. Courtenay, is a great friend of ours, and one we most highly regard and esteem. That gentleman tells me there was formerly a chapel at Walreddon, and other interesting remains of antiquity, not the smallest vestige of which now exists. A portion of the old hall, now converted into a dining parlour, still retains the arms of Edward VI. as its most predominant ornament. There are, too, many windows, arch-headed doors, turnings, windings, and passages, that are truly of ancient date. The latter are somewhat puzzling; and when I was once visiting for a fortnight at the house, I used continually to make mistakes in finding my way to my own chamber. Though I have no absolute authority for saying so, yet I doubt not, whilst Walreddon was in the possession of Sir Richard Grenville (after his marriage with Lady Howard) it underwent a siege. There was a fine old entrance gate, near the house, which some time since fell

down, and I suspect its ruinous condition was not alone the effects of time, more likely of civil contest. The spot in which this aged mansion stands is well sheltered from the winds; but it does not command much view; comfort, more than the picturesque, having been consulted by our forefathers in the erection of their dwellings. The scenery, however, belonging to the domain of Walreddon is of exceeding beauty; the woods covering the whole of a steep range of hills down to the very edge of the river, being broken and interspersed with cliffs and rocks that are as delightful in their kind as anything to be found in the West. A ride through Walreddon woods is worth coming miles to enjoy; and Mr. Courtenay tells me he has lately cut a new path, which he thinks exceeds the old one in the variety and beauty of the scenes it unfolds. The house is seen to most advantage from the elevated road (cut on the side of a steep range of hills) leading towards Beer. That road is celebrated throughout the country for its scenery; nothing can be more wild and picturesque than it is in parts. Opposite Walreddon (on the other side of the Tavy) it is characterized by features so replete with grandeur, that they may truly be called majestic. I attempted to describe the scenery of this road, in Fitz-ford, in making young John Fitz pass it, after his escape from the cave of the Virtuous Lady. Here, therefore, I say no more about it; for a tale twice told, and a view twice described, would be tedious.

Mount Tavy is a very pretty place in itself; but not equal to Walreddon or Grenofen as a domain. It is the property of John Carpenter, Esq. Mount Tavy is situated about a mile from Tavistock. Row-

don Wood, now a portion of the estate, is delightful, it lies on the side of the hill, on whose summit the house was built some years ago. That wood overhangs in many places the river Tavy, and forms a beautiful feature in the landscape, (backed by the heights of Dartmoor,) as the traveller passes on towards Hertford Bridge, or Blackdown. On the other side the river, opposite to Rowdon, is Park Wood, the residence of Mr. Evans. When the plantations that gentleman has so carefully reared shall have attained their full growth, it will be a very sweet spot ; it is now in the most promising state of improvement.

Near Park Wood, indeed, separated from it only by a few fields, is the Walla Brook, celebrated by Browne. The stream comes playing gently down the side of a hill, and passing under a bridge (over which runs the public road) it unites itself with the Tavy opposite the mount so named. Rowdon Wood many years ago was visited by so remarkable a storm, that it must not here be left unnoticed. The following account of it I extract from Mr. Polwhele's 'History of Devon.' "The most extraordinary marks of elemental violence in this neighbourhood are noticed by Mr. Gullett. On the 22nd August, 1768, about nine in the morning, the wind fresh at west-south-west, a very strange phenomenon happened at a place called *Rowdon Wood*, about a mile distant from the town of Tavistock. A passage, near forty yards wide, was made through this and an adjoining wood, according to the common opinion, by lightning. Whatever it was, it tore up vast oaks and flourishing ashes by the roots, lopped the largest limbs of some, twisted and shivered the

bodies of others, carried their tops to a considerable distance, and, in short, made such a devastation as a battery of cannon could scarcely have effected. Vivid flashes of lightning had been seen at Tavistock through the whole morning, and the thunder was loud and violent. Yet I have reason to think that this wreck of the woods was effected by a whirlwind. This whirlwind, whose direction was from about west-south-west to east-north-east, discovered itself in the parish of Beerferris, which borders on the Tamar, about six miles south-west of Tavistock. Here it destroyed an orchard by laying the apple trees level with the ground, and proceeded east-north-east without making its way by any visible traces till it arrived just opposite the town of Tavistock, when it shivered a few large trees upon a hill, and damaged a farm-house. Rowdon Wood was the next object of its vengeance, when it rolled up the vale of the Tavy, into the forest of Dartmoor, where it had full scope for exhausting itself. A person standing on an eminence in the town of Tavistock saw it, he says, moving over fields and hedges, about the size of a church, till, being intercepted by some houses and woods, he lost sight of it. After its devastation in Rowdon and the contiguous wood, it was seen by a farmer in its passage up the vale of Tavy towards Dartmoor. This man, says Mr. Gullett, whom I met upon the spot in Rowdon Wood, a few hours after the hurricane, informed me that he lived about two miles farther up the vale, in a house situated on the side of a hill. That there was no public road or travelling of any kind near his house; but that between nine and ten o'clock he and his family had been alarmed by the noise as if it were of half-a-dozen coaches rolling over the pavement;

that they ran out, and saw a large cloud, like a wool-pack, come tumbling up the vale (with a most frightful noise) and shaking all the hedges and trees over which it passed, as if it would have shivered them to atoms. The remote cause of this I conceive to have been lightning, by a very strong explosion of which the air in that spot was so considerably rarefied that the surrounding air rushed in like a torrent to fill up the vacuum, forming a body wonderfully condensed, and powerful by its violent agitation, and thus destroyed the equilibrium of the atmosphere. The equilibrium being destroyed, the whirlwind gained strength in proportion to its velocity, rushing on in the manner I have described. In order to ascertain the point whether the lightning had any immediate influence in this singular wreck, I then narrowly inspected the shivered trees, not one of which was in the least discoloured; nor could I perceive the smell of sulphur, or any other smell, indeed, than that of green wood. Some of the young saplings escaped uninjured amidst this ruinous scene; owing, as I imagine, to their pliability. But what more especially convinces me that this phenomenon was the effect of a whirlwind is, that trees at the distance of forty or fifty feet from each other were torn up by the roots, and thrown in quite opposite directions; so that their tops met and were entangled, which can only be accounted for from the whirling of the wind."

There are two or three rides, in particular, in our neighbourhood, that I would advise all persons who visit Tavistock for the purpose of viewing the scenery on no account to neglect. One of them is to Ward Bridge: in order to reach it the traveller must cross Whitchurch Down, pass by Sampford Spiney

Church, and continue along the road which leads to a house and grounds called Wood Town, the country residence of Mr. Cornish, a gentleman of this place; and a residence it is that might be termed dwelling in Paradise, so beautiful, so truly delightful is the scenery around it. Wood Town is very near Ward Bridge, and after winding down a road which resembles in steepness the slanting roof of a house, the stranger in search of the picturesque finds himself at the foot of the bridge. If he is as fond of wild and fairy-land scenery as I am, he will do as I did; which was to trespass on Mr. Cornish's grounds, by getting over a sort of rough wall of stones, briars, &c., that will at once bring him into a wood which sweeps down the hill side to the margin of the rocky stream: in this wood grow oaks that have seen centuries pass over their heads; and if the traveller who admires this spot should also happen to be acquainted with the poetry of Spenser, the scene before his eyes will forcibly remind him of many so exquisitely depicted in the 'Faerie Queene.' But I must not trust myself to talk about Spenser, or I shall never get out of the wood; Spenser, the first poet, excepting Shakspeare, that in my youthful days I ever read; who inspired me with a love of the beautiful and the wild, and made me live in a fairy world of fancy, the delight and remembrance of which can end but with life itself. The changes of time, the trials of calamity, and the many melancholy recollections which, more or less, await all in the maturity of life, cannot efface those momentary gleams of delight that break forth as we retrace in memory the strong impressions of our early days; and if these are connected with poetry and nature,

they awaken in the heart feelings which preserve in their character the freshness and vivacity of youth, though we should linger near the very portals of the tomb.

There is, too, at Ward Bridge, close to the river, a combination of rocks, moss-grown, and overhung with such aged oaks, that they must have seen the days of the Tudors ; they form, in parts, many a sylvan cell, and these afford just such a recess as I can believe Una would have chosen for the place of her repose ; and near one of the old oaks there grew, when I first saw the spot, a bramble that was not very young, but exceedingly flourishing ; and I stood and fancied there was before my eyes the very oak and bramble celebrated in the ‘Shepherd’s Candler.’

“ There grewe an aged tree on the greene,
A goodly oake sometime it had bene,
With armes full strong and largely displayed,
But of their leaves they were disarayde :
The bodie bigge, and mightily pight,
Thoroughly rooted, and of wonderous hight ;
Whilome had bene the king of the fieldes,
And moche mast to the husbände did yielde,
And with his nuts larded many swine ;
But now the grey mosse marred his rine ;
His bared boughes were beaten with stormes,
His toppe was bald, and wasted with wormes,
His honour decayed, his branches sere.
Hard by his side grewe a bragging breere,
Which proudly thrust into th’ element,
And seemed to threat the firmament :
It was embellisht with blossoms fayre,
And there to aye wanted to repayre
The shepheards’ daughters to gather flowers,
To painte their girlonds with his colowres ;
And in his small bushes used to shrowde
The sweet nightingale singing so lowde ;

Which made this foolish brere wexe so hold,
That on a time hee caste him to scold
And snebbe the goode oake, for hee was old."

And now having visited Ward Bridge *, and trespassed on Mr. Cornish's grounds (a thing by no means to be omitted by any one who has a feeling for the beautiful), the picturesque traveller must mount again; and, as the common saying goes, follow his nose, up the rough, steep, and formidable road that lies before him; it will lead him on to Dartmoor, if he likes to go so far. Let him now give his pony his head, and he will pick his own way, in such a path, much better than the rider could do it for him with the bridle. My little shaggy Dobb carries me up this hill as quietly as a lamb; I let the rein hang loose on my arm, and, whilst he paces gently on, amuse myself sometimes in picking the sweet wild strawberry that grows in the hedges by the side of the narrow way. Mr. Bray rides on before, his pony often starting and frisking, and making a gallant show of spirit; but my Dobb's merit is of a more modest kind, and as he is beginning to grow old, he cares not one jot for appearances. Dobb knows my taste; for when we come to a certain gate, situated half way up the hill, with a *posty* on either side of it (as the good people call a post in Devonshire), he stops; because he remembers that I

* My brother thus speaks of Ward Bridge, in his 'Notices of Tavistock and its Abbey,' in the 'Gentleman's Magazine':—"To obtain an idea of a Devonshire stream in all its beauty, the traveller should visit the Walkham at Ward Bridge, about four miles from Tavistock. At this spot the stream makes its way between thickly-clustering fragments of dark moss-grown rocks, and on the banks contiguous is an enchanting little wood, where the oaks are seen flourishing amidst huge masses of granite, covered with moss and lichens."

always get off at that same gate in order to walk into the field, and enjoy one of the most striking scenes in all the county : yet, such is the peculiarity of this, that I allow no one, who is pleased to take me for a guide, to open that gate, or visit that spot, excepting at *sunset*. Seen in the broad glare of day, no one would believe it was the same magical view which, when contemplated at sunset, might almost be fancied into a scene raised by some wizard, with a wave of his wand, for our delight.

You stand near the gate in a field that runs along the side of a hill ; this hill sweeps down to the river ; and you see the stream winding in the most undulating manner, for a considerable distance, through a valley clothed with wood. Hills rise beyond hills ; their forms are peculiarly striking : they are bold and acute, not too much rounded, so as to become *lumpy*, (a term of censure which has very falsely been applied to our Devonshire heights by one who knew little of them). Beyond these hills, which stand like the side slips of a scene in a theatre, opens a second, or back scene, and that crowns the whole. Part is distinct, part so ærial, so radiant in the glitter of sunshine, so blended with the ultramarine tints of evening, that you see it at one moment as if it were coming into regular forms and distinctness ; and at another it seems to die away and lose itself in air. Fronting this extreme distance, however, arises what would immediately conceive to be a magnificent castle ; towers, and turrets, and flanking stand in awful array before you ; and you think of knights, and ladies, and sentinels on the watch : and wonder who, in these days, can be the lord of such a stronghold as would have suited the

rebel barons in the time of King Stephen, or of King John, when they made him consent to sign Magna Charta. But the castle before you, on which the setting sun pours a flood of light, is much older than King John's days, older even than those of the Saxons; the last of the Princes of Dunhevid may have held his court there, or, in the worship of his false gods, have there poured forth the cruel libations of human blood, and have acted worse deeds than did the most ferocious of the old Saxons when they took possession, and made offerings to Frea or Odin in the very heart of the moor. It is Vixen Tor that rises with such majesty of aspect, and assumes, when seen from this particular spot, a form so completely castellated, that it would deceive the eye of any stranger who, for the first time, looks upon it at the hour of sunset; for if he goes there at noon-day he will spoil all, and spoil my description, the truth of which I would call on Dobb himself to witness, if he had but a tongue for the service of his mistress, for well does he know the scene. Indeed only the last time we visited the field, Dobb, getting loose from the gate-post to which he had been tied up, walked in after me, and very unceremoniously rubbed his nose on my shoulder, no doubt to let me know how much he admired the view. But Dobb (who has as quick an understanding for the road home as any christian, and is very fond of turning thither, if you feel disposed to let him take his own way) was not so soon to be indulged on this memorable evening.

Up we mounted again; I now led the van; Mr. Bray formed the main body, and our John, as usual, brought up the rear, though at a distance rather

more than customary: probably the distance was on this occasion chosen, not in order to take a nap, as he sometimes does when riding after his master, but to solace himself with a little harmony; for I soon heard John, in a truly sentimental style, singing, sotto voce, "O! no, we never mention her," in a most dolorous key, every note of which was out of tune; for, though our John is a cheerful honest soul, somehow or other, possibly from defect of ear, he always sings in the minor; and as he is exceedingly fond of music, it is the more remarkable.

As we advanced, we found the wild and romantic scenery which surrounded us on every side was scarcely English in its character, and far more like that described by Sir Walter Scott as peculiar to the Highlands.

I am very sorry that I have no adventures to record in our navigation among the rocks to enliven this letter as we journey on towards the moor; but, excepting a country lad, we really met nobody but a couple of old women; one of them, dressed in a red cloak, and carrying a bundle of sticks on her shoulder, reminded me of Otway's Hag, with "age grown double:" so fierce and ill-humoured an expression I never beheld in any one of the peasantry in Devonshire, old or young: had she lived in the days of witch-hunting, her face might have endangered her life; Lavater would have read a lecture on such a physiognomy. Presently we met a man driving that truly moorland burthen, a horse laden

th a *crook* piled with peat. A *brood* of pigs (as

1, in the truly Devonian phrase, called
; flying, as they were grunting and en-
lves in a puddle in the middle of the

road ; and lastly, John killed an adder that was very large, as he was sunning himself in one of the narrow lanes, and which, by certain marks (red rings, I think,) about the head, he pronounced to be the most venomous of its kind.

At length we came to what Mr. Bray, who is very fond of naming every striking place in our excursions, has been pleased to call the *Pass*, at the entrance of the moor from this road. Certainly giving names is a part of his vocation, and some hundred years hence, I expect, many a rock designated by him, and possibly this of the *Pass*, may find its way into the maps ; for names, like everything else, must have a beginning. And, as I have some ambition to be immortalized myself, especially in this country, on which, I may say, I have bestowed some pains, I do hope that a certain druidical basin at Over Tor (or Overturned Tor) on the moor, in which I once washed my hands, may, out of respect to my memory, bear for ever and a day the very elegant name Mr. Bray bestowed upon it, that of “Mrs. Bray’s wash-hand basin.” I had also the honour of discovering it, being the only Druidical vestige, save one, I ever found out on the moor to add to the number of its antiquities. The *Pass*, towards which we are proceeding, is nothing more than what a pass ought to be ; there is space enough for the traveller to go through between two enormous and fantastic-looking rocks, that stand on either side the way, and were once, no doubt, joined together as closely as the Siamese twins, till the powers below gave the old earth a good shaking, and sent them asunder. Dobb clears the pass, and finding no temptation to loiter on the road, which he sometimes does, if a little

inviting grass catches his eye, we soon enter on the moor; and the road we are now upon leads us to what the Devonians call the *Back-see-fore-see** side of Vixen Tor, where the mass of rocks (for this tor consists of three contiguous masses) rise one hundred and ten feet above the surface with an air of insulated grandeur, in the midst of an elevated space of ground, where all beyond its immediate vicinity is tors, or hills, or broken fragments of granite; but there is no object to interpose and lessen, by a too close opposition in magnitude, the imposing aspect of this sphinx of the moor. But I have so often talked of Vixen Tor, that I will here say no more about it, and one of these days I hope you may see it yourself.

You may now, if you please, ride thence to the grand Coursus, (grand in length, but diminutive in height,) and turning into the road near Merrivale bridge, all that remains may be left to the ponies; for no sooner do they once find that they are on the road home, than they prick up their ears, and set off, each emulous to be the foremost; and John, who rides the most spirited of all, has sometimes hard work to keep it from bolting; and, if it did so, he would not be very likely to meet with any one on the dreary moor who could succeed in stopping a runaway pony in the very remarkable manner I once saw Sir William Trelawny (the present member for Cornwall) stop a horse that bolted with the jockey. It carried him twice or thrice round the race-course, to the terror of all the spectators, who

* On inquiring of a Devonian gentleman, born and bred, what this term could possibly mean, he told me it meant "*the back part of the other front.*" Surely Ireland is not the only land of bulls.

expected the high-spirited animal would run till he dropped, and that the lad, who was calling out for help, and whose hands were dreadfully cut in pulling the bridle, would be killed. Sir William Trelawny saw the boy's danger, crossed the ground, rode up, and caught the flying racer by *the tail*: thus checked, and probably surprised by the novelty of such a check, the creature was instantly stopped, and the boy was safe. This circumstance occurred at the Tavistock races, on Whitchurch Down, in the summer of 1830.

Another of our beautiful rides is from this town to the Tamar, near New Bridge; and there, before you come to the bridge, turn off on the left hand and pass through a gate, this will lead you down towards a road which runs along (and partly through the most delightful woods) close to the banks of the Tamar. The rocks of Morwel, still on the left, tower above your head, and after passing under them and through a succession of scenery, of which I give no minute description, because it would fill pages to do it anything like justice, you wind up a steep ascent (near the wear-head) and pass under the shadow of some of the loftiest trees I ever saw, and meet on your way a beautiful silver stream that comes tumbling down and continues its course till it falls into the Tamar below; and you hear, also, the rush of unseen waters—a circumstance that always produces so much effect on the mind in the midst of a wood. On you go, through scenes that are really enchanting, till you turn into the *new road*. This was, but a very few years since, cut under the immediate direction and at the expense of the Duke of Bedford; and this act of munificence has afforded to the public

at large so much delight, and thrown open to them such a glorious ride through scenes of almost matchless grandeur and beauty in their kind, that it deserves the most honourable mention. The Duke's Road leads you over the summits of all the fearful rocks and precipices of Morwel; but they are only fearful in appearance, for the road itself is perfectly safe, and none but nervous or timid people think of getting off their horses as they pass it. After riding on for some distance, you come to a small wood of dwarf oaks; you enter it; pass along the little path on foot, and finally step out on what you have come all this way principally to see—Morwel Rock. This is all I shall say of it, having already described it at large; for it was this very rock which I chose on account of its beauty, and its extraordinary character, as the scene for the interview in my novel between old Sir Hugh Fitz and George Stanwich. I have only one observation to make here respecting it, that Morwel Rock, though truly it is a magnificent object, has no right alone to engross the name, since all the rocks around it are likewise those of Morwel, and several are quite as beautiful as this; but its having been considered the greatest lion of its neighbourhood for so many years, the good folks who are accustomed to go thither in the summer months to boil their tea-kettles, will not be prevailed with to think it can have a rival, far less an equal. The whole scene, from that rock to the end of the Duke's Road, affords a succession of the noblest objects that can be witnessed in this, or perhaps in any other county in England; always excepting the Lakes, which I have not seen, but which, from drawings and engravings, I know are on a more lofty scale of magnificence.

The Duke of Bedford has an elegant house, called a cottage, at Endsleigh. The ride thither, through Blanche-down Wood (though that is a far-about track) is indeed so delightful, that all persons who would wish to approach near the cottage with most advantage, to enjoy the scenery, ought to go that way. I do not attempt any minute description of Endsleigh; many of its most beautiful views have been more than once drawn and engraved; and strangers from all parts of the country come to see it. There is a dell, called the Dairy Dell, watered by a running stream, that is of a most pleasing character; the Swiss Cottage is very pretty, so is the view from the terrace, which at sun-set appears to the greatest perfection; and the house exhibits much of comfort, combined with good taste, in its decorations. I once heard the Duke of Bedford say, that he had cut rides to the extent of forty miles in his domain of Endsleigh. Those I have seen, especially through Blanche-down, merit the attention of the traveller, and will well repay him for the trouble of finding them out. I remember one spot in particular, not far from Newbridge, that might truly be called Switzerland on a miniature scale. You ride through a wood, where the birds are so little molested, that I saw pheasants, woodpeckers, and birds of every description, amusing themselves by flying from bough to bough, in a manner that showed them to be very tame, or fearless of the approach of a human being. Their haunts seem, indeed, to be undisturbed. Below, the Tamar ran with great rapidity, foaming over the blackest rocks;—on the opposite side the river, a

steep hill, covered with crags of granite of a greyish hue, had, starting from between them, a vast number of young firs, lately planted: altogether the river, the heights, the granite, and the firs, formed a scene of a character so peculiar, that I never recollect having seen one of a similar nature in England. Mr. Bray agreed with me in opinion that it might truly be called Swiss: but when the young firs shall have attained their full growth, the rocks will be hidden, and the peculiarity of the scene alas! destroyed.

Denham Bridge is another of our delightful rides, but the finest parts of its vicinity are difficult of access. My nephew went thither on a fishing excursion, up the river or down it, I do not know which: sometimes he waded ankle deep in the water; but he thought little of such difficulties in his progress, as he declared, on his return, that he had never witnessed any scenery that excelled what he had that day passed through in his excursion.

The village of Peter Tavy is another point of attraction in this neighbourhood. Close to it is a narrow glen or valley, called the *Coombe*, but which I have ventured to name the *Valley of Waterfalls*; on account of the vast number of small, but exquisitely beautiful falls there seen. All the artists who have hitherto visited Peter Tavy, and we have guided many thither, declare it to be an unrivalled village in the variety of beauties it affords as studies for the painter. A mill there, the property of Mr. Bray, has been drawn and painted over and over again, has been hung in Somerset House, and

the Water-colour Exhibition, and was never yet returned unsold on the hands of an artist*. The subject it affords is strikingly characteristic.—A rush of water turns the wheel, and forms a cascade that falls into a rapid mountain stream (which rises near, and comes down the Coombe) as clear as the brightest crystal; the thatched gable of the mill is covered with ivy; a little bridge crosses the stream opposite the cottage door, and as you stand on this you see the crystal waters come pouring down a shelving and rocky channel in a manner that the pencil alone could pourtray. Above your head wave the branches of some aged and picturesque firs, and if you turn towards the village, the cottages are seen in pretty clusters amidst the trees, and the beautiful tower, with its Gothic pinnacles, finishes a scene that is of such peculiar interest, the eye is never weary in looking on it though seen a thousand times before. Near the mill cottage the children assemble in groups: and ponies, donkies, pigs, and cocks and hens, are all found there, forming the most animated accompaniments that a Morland or a Wilkie would have desired to complete the picture of rustic life.

Mr. Harding made an oil painting of some cottages just above the entrance to the Coombe; he was rather unfortunate in his visit to the latter spot; for chancing to come hither during the long drought of 1826, there was so little water in the rivers and streams, that he lost the sight of them in all their

* The mill has been drawn by Mr. Lewis and his son more than once, by Mr. Harding, Miss Kempe, Mr. R. Stothard, Mr. Hitchins, Mr. Kempe, Mr. Bray, and lastly by Miss Taylor (now Mrs. Worsley), a lady whose talents are of so high an order, that she justly deserves to be ranked with the best water-colour artists of this age.

beauty. Miss Taylor was more fortunate ; we carried her to the Coombe when it was exactly in the state to please an artist ; she was indeed delighted with it, and thought it richly merited the name I had given to it of the Valley of Waterfalls. It is not only the wild and striking manner in which the stream rushes down over the thousand masses of rock, that forms the interest of this spot—the surrounding heights are rocky and broken, and afford and endless diversity of views, with Brent Tor rising from the midst of an elevated plain, as the finishing and prominent object in the distance. Had Claude composed the landscape (as he often did in his pictures, by putting together select portions sketched from nature), he would have put Brent Tor just where it stands and no where else.

Peter Tavy is amusing on account of the living groups with which it teems. Such a place it is for children, that it would alarm the admirers of Mr. Malthus's system, could they but see the infantine race who grow up in health, cheerfulness, and poverty, in absolute contradiction to the wisdom of that "eminent philosopher," and render Peter Tavy one of the most joyous villages under the sun. You may see the little things of a summer afternoon, not overburthened with clothes, sometimes ragged, and with neither bonnet nor cap to confine a profusion of flaxen hair, as fat and as rosy as young cupids, dabbling in the water like ducks ; or tumbling over the rocks, and no harm done, and floating their tiny boats down the current of the stream, as careless and as happy, as if a political economist had never issued an edict against their existence. Here you may find a child of seven or eight years old nursing

a baby almost as big as herself, and deriving consequence from the occupation, playing the woman over the other children, or calling out to some one of them by the name of *little girl* (as one child is very fond of calling another), desiring her to keep out of the water, and not to dirt her pinafore in making mud pies. The elder boys are engaged with their kites, or their more active games, whilst a group of little fellows amuse themselves with piling up loose stones, and making baby walls in imitation of those of granite, called *hedges*, on the borders of Dartmoor. In Peter Tavy, too, may be seen "the spinners and knitters in the sun;" and the very old and the very young are often seen together side by side; and girls with their pitchers filling them with water from the little channels and rivulets that abound throughout the village. These present pictures that are of endless variety and interest to all who delight in the scenes of rural life.

The school-house displays, too, a large assembly of the rising generation; it stands near the church: the tower and pinnacles of the latter form a beautiful point in the surrounding landscape, from whatever direction it may be viewed. The churchyard is on all sides surrounded by a number of large old lime trees, that cast a sombre shadow around, quite in harmony with the spot consecrated to the repose of the dead. Near Peter Tavy is Cudlipp Town, of which Mr. Bray is lord of the manor. It is of a character similar to the scenery about Peter Tavy, and has plenty of water and rocks. Cudlipp Town is the place about which there were so many debates in parliament in the sessions of 1832, when it was thought proper to cut out that extensive manor

from the parish of Tavistock, so that the new franchise, under the Reform Bill then about to pass, should not be extended to the tenants there residing. This exclusion, though the debates it occasioned were known to all the kingdom, Mr. Bray, from circumstances not worth detailing, did not know till it was too late to petition to obtain for his Cudlipp Town tenantry the same privileges as the rest of the parishioners were about to receive.

The last time we visited Peter Tavy in company with some friends, we followed a lane that runs from the church towards Mary Tavy; and whilst going along, we remarked that these villages were so called from the virgin and saint to which the churches were dedicated. Mr. Bray told us a story about a judge, who, on a trial being held concerning some land in these parishes, confounded the names of the villages with those of the witnesses; and gave an order for Peter and Mary Tavy to be summoned into court. After following this long, narrow, and muddy lane, we at length came to a gate, which we opened, and stood on the brow of a hill. A beautiful sight here burst upon us. Below rolled the Tavy, under cliffs and crags, not of a very lofty but of a most pleasing character; and in the midst of the greensward, on this side the river from its banks, arose an insulated and enormous mass, called Mary Tavy Rock, covered with ivy, lichens, and every sort of rock plant that can, I believe, be found in Devon. Passing this mass*,

* Whilst this letter was passing through the press, Mr. Lewis, the elder, has again visited Tavistock, and made a beautiful sketch of this scene. He declares this vicinity to be unique in beauty and in subjects for an artist.

which, Mr. Harding said, would in itself furnish many subjects for a painter, we followed the river to one of those light wooden bridges, called clams. This, near Mary Tavy, is a great height above the stream, which, as usual, tumbles over vast portions of broken rock, and no where in greater beauty than near this clam. We continued our walk, still on the banks of the Tavy, but meeting it as it comes rapid and foaming from the moor. Sometimes the path, which was rough, led us close to the water; at others it carried us up the banks, and along rocks, till at length we had to scale one which intercepted our progress like a wall, and then we had to climb up a steep hill, very near the river, that was beautifully diversified with forest trees. We next perceived, on the opposite side, a line of cliffs that rose to a considerable height, partially grown with wood, where there was any soil on their surface, and the whole backed by elevated lands, and the never-failing crest of all the views in this quarter—Brent Tor, with its little church perched high in the air.

From this spot, as far as to Tavy Cleeve and Rattle Brook, the views are as varied as they are wild and beautiful; and I would recommend every traveller who comes hither to see our scenery, to find his road out to Peter Tavy, crossing Hertford bridge in his way, which is in itself worth seeing, thence to continue on as far as Mr. Bray's mill in Peter Tavy, to ramble to the Coombe, return back through the *Shellands* (a parcel of land near the mill whose name reminds one of the Scotch word Sheeling), and then if he can get any little boy to become his guide (and sixpence, I dare say, will procure him that advantage), he may go on to Mary Tavy Rock, the Clam, &c. ; and if he be a good walker, and has another

sixpence to spare his guide, he may proceed to Cudlipp town and Hill bridge; and so he will have seen all the sights in that quarter in one round. And when he gets to Cudlipp town, and asks where the town may be, let him understand that a Devonshire one is not made up of number, as it sometimes consists of a single house, or two or three cottages, for here we never rate quantity in such matters. I once was directed to a town which, when I arrived there, I found to consist of two pig-sties and a mud hut; yet town it was, and will be so called through successive generations.

And now, having pointed out many of the most interesting scenes in our neighbourhood, I shall conclude this letter with the relation of a remarkable circumstance or two connected with them; at least the first may be unquestionably considered under that head.

Our friend Mr. Evans, of Park Wood, the other day told me the particulars of a story about a ruffian who, some fifty years ago, concealed himself in a wood on the banks of the Tamar. His name was Nicholas Mason. What might have been his motive, as he was the son of respectable parents, to adopt the trade of a bandit I do not know. But he succeeded in terrifying and laying such heavy contributions on the neighbourhood by his nightly depredations, that the farmers and gentlemen at length combined to rout him out. This freebooter was as light of foot as he was of hand; and one of his tricks was to get into farm-houses by descending, without care, the chimneys during the time the inmates were at rest. His spoils he placed in a bag, and managed to make his retreat in the same secret manner. For some time his mode

of action was not suspected, as in the morning all the doors were found locked, just as they were on the previous night, and no signs of violence appeared. The good people, thus robbed, were puzzled what to think, and as a bad character is a very bad thing, the devil being the father of thieving as well as of lying, obtained the credit of achieving in his own person what were in fact but the acts of one of his sons. However, as the robber, grown bold by success, at length ventured on hen-roosts and the firstlings of the flock, human agency was suspected to have some concern in the matter.

The robber was at length discovered to have secreted himself in a cave, situated in a thick wood near the Tamar. The discovery was made by a hound quarrelling with a brother hound for some bones that were scattered near the entrance of Mason's den. The squire and huntsmen were led to suspect, from this circumstance, that they had found out the hiding place of the thief; and having dexterously concerted their measures, so as not to give him any previous alarm, they called in the assistance of some sturdy ploughmen who were working not very far from the spot. The attack commenced, and the robber, like a hare, got the start of his pursuers; for huntsmen, hounds, and peasants were all after him. Suddenly he was espied in a thicket of heath and furze, under the brow of a precipice, as he was seeking concealment among the adjacent rocks. From this strong hold he was speedily hurled by a bold peasant armed with a pitchfork, who managed to crawl up the cliff after him, though not without danger, as Mason snapped a pistol at him, which providentially missed fire.

He was at length taken, yet not till the huntsmen and dogs, that had unkennelled him, were again obliged to follow in chase, so fleet was he of foot, so quick in doubling, and so intimately acquainted with the place in all its nooks, windings, and ways of retreat. On being taken he displayed a temper of the most ferocious daring, told the two gentlemen who had been the principal hunters that he regretted they had escaped him, and assured them they owed their safety to their not having caught his eye in time to put his fire-arms in proper order to shoot them.

The party next examined the cave; the ruffian had there collected every sort of necessary for his own accommodation: there was a pan of milk (for he used to milk the farmers' cows long before daylight) scalding over the embers of a wood fire; a fat sheep that he had stolen, and was skinning at the moment of the discovery, hung on the side of the cave, and all sorts of stolen goods were there amassed in regular order. These were removed, as the whole party, with shouts of triumph, bore along their captive to undergo the examination of the magistrates in full assembly. His father and mother, poor but honest people (to whom he had always been a torment from his earliest days), showed the utmost sorrow for his miserable condition, and felt that shame for him which he did not feel for himself. Such was the terror this man had inspired, that though he was in custody, and about to stand his trial, many of the poor country people feared to swear to their own property found in the cave; one man, however, deposed to a shirt as belonging to : husband; she swore to the work being her own, l s could not be mistaken, for she was left-

handed. Other witnesses at length came forward, and Mason was convicted and hanged. The wood in which he had secreted himself is situated near Cartha Martha rocks; it is called Dunterwood.

After gratefully thanking you for the honour you have conferred on me in allowing me, for so long a period, the pleasure of your correspondence, and of receiving, in the kindest manner, such information as I have been able to convey to you concerning the history, &c. of the vicinities of the Tavy and the Tamar, I was about to close these letters, and for the present to take my leave, when a volume I had never before seen was put into my hands. It was the ‘Historic Collections, relating to the Monasteries of Devon,’ by the Rev. George Oliver, of Exeter. Mr. Oliver is known as a learned antiquary, and a most worthy man, one universally respected. He is the minister of the Roman Catholic chapel in that city.

I found in his book some most curious matter relating to the Abbey of Tavistock, which he had principally collected from those unquestionable authorities, ‘*The Registers of the Bishops at Exeter.*’ To omit such notices as this historian’s work have placed within my reach would render these letters incomplete; to abridge them would be unjust to Mr. Oliver and to the subject: I venture, therefore, to give entire the following extracts respecting

“THE ABBOTS OF TAVISTOCK.

“1st. *Almer*, who is described in the Cartulary of the Abbey as a good scholar, and exemplary for his piety to God and charity to man. He was doomed to witness the utter destruction of his monastery by

the Danish invaders. How long he survived this catastrophe is uncertain.

“2nd. *Livingus*. He was originally a monk of St. Swithen’s Monastery at Winchester. His benefactions and services to Tavistock Abbey entitle him to the name of its second founder. ‘Per Ordgarum surgendi exordium, per Livingum Episcopum crescendi accepit auspiciū.—Wil. Malmes.’ In 1032 he was promoted to the See of *Crediton*. On the death of his uncle Brithwold, the Bishop of *Cornwall*, he succeeded in uniting that diocese in perpetuity to his own see. In 1038 King Harold appointed him to the Bishopric of Worcester, which he continued to hold, with *Crediton*, until his death, on Sunday, 23rd March, 1046. He was buried at Tavistock.

“3rd. *Aldred*, a monk of Winchester, succeeded *Livingus*, first as Abbot of Tavistock, and secondly as Bishop of Worcester. In 1060, he was translated to York, where he sat until his death, on 11th September, 1069.

“4th. *Sistricus*, who died in the Spring of 1082.

“5th. *Gaufred I.*, who died in 1088.

“6th. *Wymond*. He was deposed by St. Anselm for simony, in 1102.—See ‘Eadmeri Hist.,’ fol. 67.

“7th. *Osbert* was abbot in 1109*.

“8th. *Gaufred II.* was the next abbot.

“9th. *Robert de Plympton*, who is supposed to have died in 1145.

“10th. *Robert Postett*, who was abbot nine years.

“11th. *Wulter*, who is said to have died in 1174.

* We regret the very jejune and imperfect account of the following abbots until the accession of Philip Trentheful in 1259, when we take for our guide the Registers of the Exeter Bishops.

"12th. *Baldwin*.

"13th. *Stephen*.

"14th. *Herbert*. To this abbot Pope Celestine II. addressed a bull of privileges, on 29th May, (See '2 Regist. Vesey,' fol. 41.) 1193.

"15th. *Jordan* was appointed, I believe, in 1204.

"16th. *William de Kernit*, Prior of Otterton, was elected Jordan's successor in 1220. He held his dignity four years.

"17th. *John*.

"18th. *Alan de Cornwall*, who died in 1248.

"19th. *Robert de Kitecnol*.

"20th. *Thomas*, who died in 1257.

"21st. *John de Northampton*, who presided during two years.

"22nd. *Philip Trentheful*, a monk of St. Swithin's Monastery, at Winchester, was confirmed the next abbot, in October, 1259. He made his profession to Bishop Bronescombe, in the following words:—Vid. Regist. fol. 8. 'Ego frater Philippus, electus Abbas Ecclesie de Tavistock, promitto tibi, Pater Dne Waltere Exon Epe, tuisque successoribus canonice intronizandis et Sancte Exoniensis Ecclesie, fidem et canonicam per omnia subjectionem.'

"23rd. *Alured*, confirmed abbot on the 29th Sept. 1260.

"N.B. Fecit professionem quam obtulit super principale Altare.—'Regist. Bronescombe.'

"24th. *John Chubb* succeeded, but was deposed by Bishop Bronescombe, in crastino Sancti Edmundi Regis et Martyris, (21st Nov.) 1269.

"The bishop describes him as 'Monasterii bonorum dilapidator intolerabilis et manifestus,' repro-

bates his scandalous neglect of religious discipline, and enumerates instances of his savage violence and even sacrilege.

“25th. *Robert*, who was substituted in the place of *John Chubbe*, on Palm Sunday, 1270.

“26th. *Robert Champeaux, aliter Campbell*, succeeded in 1278.

“This abbot is highly commended for his tender piety and zeal for improvement. During his government several parts of the Abbey were rebuilt, but particularly the conventual church, which is said to have been three hundred and seventy-eight feet long without including the Lady’s Chapel. Bishop Stapeldon dedicated this noble church, and two altars in the nave, on the 21st of Aug. 1318. It was finally taken down in 1670.

“On the 21st of May, the same year, the bishop had dedicated St. Eustachius’ parish church at Tavistock, which adjoined to the Abbey inclosure.

“This amiable and benevolent abbot, with the consent of his convent, A. D. 1291, appropriated for ever the whole profits arising from an estate called Westlydeton (granted two years before to his Abbey by Sir Odo Le Arcedeakne), to the providing of the poor with clothes and shoes; the annual distribution of which was made in the cloisters on the second of November, the commemoration of all the Faithful departed.

“In consequence of this abbot’s petition, Bishop Stapledon approved and confirmed a perpetual chantry to be erected in the parish church of Whitechurch, near Tavistock, for four priests, who should be bound to celebrate the daily and nightly office, together with the service of the dead: to say three,

or at least two requiem masses every day, besides one of our Lady. In their suffrages they were to pray for the prosperity of the said abbot and convent; for King Edward II. and his Queen Isabella; for the bishop, dean, and chapter of Exeter, and for the founders and benefactors of Tavistock Abbey. The superior of these priests was to be called the arch-priest; he was to live in common with them, and they were to be called his *socii* or fellows. He was also to be charged with the care of the parishioners: *vid.* Stapeldon's *Regist.* fol. 165.

"N.B. The famous charter, '*De Libertatibus Comitatus Devon*,' granted by King John, and its confirmation by his son Henry III., were preserved in Tavistock Abbey. Bishop Stapeldon took copies of these originals, and has inserted them in fol. 152 of his register.

"22nd. *Robert Bonus*, inducted 13th June, on the recommendation of Pope John XXII. 1328.

"N.B. Bishop Grandison deposed this abbot for contumacy and intemperate behaviour, 24th of October, 1333.

"23rd. *John de Courtenay*, substituted for Robert, 24th of April, 1334.

"N.B. This abbot had very little of the spirit of a religious man. He was passionately fond of field sports, was very conceited and foppish in his dress, and a most incurable spendthrift. During his government discipline seems to have been banished from the convent. Frequently but two of the community were present at the regular meals in the refectory, whilst the rest were feasting sumptuously in their private chambers. From the neglect of repairs the

monastery was falling into a dilapidated state, and, moreover, was overcharged with debts. ‘*Monasterium quod solebat abundare divitiis et honore, erat et est oneribus debitorum usque at mccc. libras sterlingorum et aliorum multiplicium onerum sarcinâ pregavatum.*’ Vide 1st Regist., Grandison, fo. 134.

“29th. *Richard de Esse* succeeded in 1348.

“20th. *Stephen Langdon* succeeded in 1362.

“31st. *Thomas Cullyng*, confirmed as abbot on the 12th of February, 1380-1.

“I believe this abbot finished the campanile of the church, begun by his predecessor. He died June 11th.

“32nd. *John May*, confirmed as his successor, 30th July, 1402.

He died 7th February, 1421-2.

“33rd. *Thomas Mede*, elected 26th March, and confirmed by Bishop Lacy, 19th April, 1422.

“N.B. This abbot is accused of neglecting regular discipline, of enormous dilapidations, and of simony; but the charge appears to be exaggerated.

“34th. *Thomas Cryspyn*, elected 11th June, 1442. His death happened 5th April, 1447.

“35th. *William Pewe*, elected 2d May; confirmed abbot 23d of that month, and died 26th December, 1450.

“36th. *John Dynnynton* was elected to succeed William on the 17th of the following January, and was confirmed by Bishop Lacy 20th February.

“N.B. It appears from 2, ‘*Rymer’s Fœdera*,’ p. 408, that this abbot obtained a papal grant to use the

pontificals, and to give the episcopal benediction at mass and at table.

“37th. *Richard*, whose institution is not recorded in the ‘Register.’

“38th. *Richard Yerne*. I can find no date of his confirmation.

“*Richard Banham*: the date of whose election or confirmation I have not succeeded in discovering. King Henry VIII. created him a mitred abbot 22d January, 1513. It may be observed here that these parliamentary abbots ranked among themselves in the upper house according to seniority of creation. The contest which this Abbot maintained with Bishop Oldham has been variously related; but the following facts, extracted from that bishop’s Register, may be depended upon:—

“This abbot was cited 15th April, 1513, to appear before Dr. Richard Collet, the bishop’s commissioner, to answer to the charge of contempt of episcopal authority. The abbot, instead of explaining the occasion of his conduct, or offering any apology, produced a written appeal to the Roman court. The appeal was declared by the commissioner to be frivolous and inadmissible. For his obstinacy the abbot was suspended that very day; and, on the 22d of the same month, was excommunicated ‘propter multiplicem contumaciam.’ On the 10th of May he appeared in person before Bishop Oldham at the palace in Exeter, and on his bended knees most humbly and most earnestly intreated to be absolved from his censures; and offered to submit himself unconditionally to the bishop’s correction. The bishop then tendered the oath of submission to the see of Exeter, and, after he

had taken it, absolved him from his censures, whereupon the abbot paid him down five pounds of gold.

“ ‘The repentance of the abbot seems to have been insincere; for, soon after, he appealed to the Primate, William Warham, and to Richard Fitz-James, Bishop of London. The question chiefly turned on the right of episcopal visitation. These prelates decided on the 8th of February following, that the abbot had not produced any indults, bulls, or vouchers authorizing any exemption from the jurisdiction of the ordinary; they therefore decreed that he and his convent should submit to this regularly constituted authority, as their predecessors had done from time immemorial: they recommended to the abbot to apply to the bishop for the benefit of absolution; and they directed the bishop to confer it without hesitation, and to treat the abbot with mildness and paternal affection.’ So far Oldham’s Register.

“ ‘This abbot was not discouraged by defeat. From the primate he appealed to the Court of Rome; and at last succeeded in obtaining from Pope Leo X. a bull of such ample and extraordinary privileges as completely to indemnify him for his former expenses and trouble. This bull is dated 14th September, 1517 [it is copied in Mr. Oliver’s Appendix]. It expressly exempts the Abbey of Tavistock, with its several dependencies, from all archiepiscopal, and all episcopal jurisdiction, visitation, and superiority, and takes it and them under the sole and immediate protection of the Holy See. It declares that all suspensions, interdicts, and excommunications pronounced against them by any other autho-

rity than that of the See Apostolic are absolutely null and void: ‘Nulla, irrita et invalida, nulliusque roboris vel momenti.’ As an acknowledgment for such sweeping liberality, the abbot was annually to pay to the apostolic chamber, on the feast of SS. Peter and Paul, half an ounce of gold (i. e.), twenty shillings of lawful money of Great Britain.

“40th. *John Peryn*, it is said, succeeded in December, 1523. But his confirmation is not recorded in Bishop Veysey’s Registers. In virtue of the bull of Pope Leo X., I observe that this abbot styles himself, in several leases before me, ‘*Abbas exempti monasterii Beate Marie et Sci Rumonis de Tavystock.*’ On the surrender of the monastery he was granted a pension of 100*l.* per annum. Nineteen of his religious obtained salaries at the same time. The grants of these pensions are dated 26th April, 31st Henry VIII.

“The revenues of this Abbey were rated at 902*l.* 5*s.* 7*d.* per annum. The site of this great Abbey and the principal of its estates were granted by King Henry VIII., on the 4th July, 31st year of his reign, to Lord John Russell.

“The abbot’s residence in Exeter occupied the site of those premises in South-street now in the possession of Mr. Russell. I have met with a lease (dated 7th of November, a few months before the dissolution of the Abbey) by which John, the last abbot, let the said dwelling-house to Edward Brydgeman, and Jane his wife, for the term of sixty years. ‘*Hospicii nostri vocati Le Inne de Bere cum omnibus suis pertinenciis in vico Australi Civitatis Exon.*” Query, was this the house men-

tioned in 'Doomsday' as being mortgaged to the Abbey by a citizen of Exeter?

"After the suppression of the Abbey, a chapel was erected within its inclosure, and licensed for the celebration of divine worship, at the request of the noble Lady Dorothy Mountjoy, on the 10th March, 1541-2.—Vid. 'Regist. Veysey,' fol. 109.

"The registers mention a priory in St. Mary's, the principal of the Scylly Islands, as being dependent on Tavistock Abbey.

"Bishop Brantyngham, 26th Sept. 1374, granted an indulgence of twenty days to all persons within the diocese of Exeter, *Penitentibus et Confessis*, who should contribute to the support of the Lepers' House, dedicated to St. Mary Magdalene, at Tavy-stock.

"There was a chapel of St. Margaret near the town of Tavistock.—Vid. 3. 'Regist. Lacy,' fol. 53.

"Also, a chapel of St. John the Baptist, *Juxta aquam de Tavy in Parochiâ de Tavystock*.—Ibid. fol. 128."

"LICENSE FOR THE ABBAT OF TAVISTOCKE TO
WEAR THE PONTIFICALIA.*

"The King, to all to whom these presents shall come, greeting. Be it known that we, of our especial grace, have granted and given permission for us and our heirs, as much as in us lies, to John Denynton, Abbat of the house and church of the blessed St. Mary and St. Rumon, to solicit and have permission from the sovereign Pontiff, the present Pope, to use the mitre, amice (almucio), sandals, and other pontifical insignia, and of blessing in the

* From notices of Tavistock Abbey, by Mr. Kempe.

solemnity of masses, and pronouncing absolutions with the same authority, and in the same manner, as any Bishop uses.

“And that the said Abbat may likewise prosecute any other provisions concerning the above matter, and enjoy the benefit of them for himself and his successors for ever.

“And further, we, of our greater favour, have granted and given license to the said Abbat, that he may receive Apostolic Letters and Bulls for the aforesaid provisions, and all and singular therein contained, execute, read, and cause to be read, and them and every of them altogether, fully and wholly, quietly, peaceably, and without harm, according to the effect of the said Letters and Bulls, and each of them, may use and enjoy ; forbidding that the said Abbat or his proctors, fautors, counsellors, helpers, or adherents, or any other his solicitors, readers, or publishers of the said Letters and Bulls, shall be by us or our heirs impeded, disquieted, disturbed, molested or oppressed, the statutes for provisors, ordinations, provisions, enacted to the contrary, or other things, causes, matters whatever, which on our or any other part may be said or alleged, notwithstanding.

“In witness whereof we have caused these our Letters to be made patent.

“Witness the King, at Westminster, the third day of February, (36 Hen VI., A.D. 1457.)”

And now having conveyed to you in these letters, all the information that I deem of interest, or could collect, respecting this most interesting portion of

my county, I must conclude with repeating the hope that it will not be very long before you fulfil your promise of allowing us the happiness of seeing you, and guiding you in person to the various scenes I have attempted to describe.

In the interval, allow me to assure you that should these letters appear before the public, whatever may be their fate, my debt of obligation to you can never be forgotten. To you I owe the first suggestion, and I may add, the plan of my most pleasing task, which has afforded me hours of delight in the composition. And to know that I have been so fortunate in any way to afford you entertainment, or to meet your approval in the attempt, will be, in the recollection of my labours, their highest and most valued reward.

Adieu, my dear Sir,

And believe me ever gratefully

And respectfully yours,

ANNA ELIZA BRAY.

LETTER XLI.

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQ.

CONTENTS:—Additional notes to a former letter; wherefore here given—Walking Stewart and the Turks—Jerningham, the poet—His anecdotes of Pope, &c.—Sir Francis Bourgeois—Anecdotes of De Lille, the French poet—Memorabilia of the late celebrated Mr. Mathias—Some of his original letters, connected with the subject of a biographical sketch touched upon in this volume, given at large.

Vicarage, Tavistock, October 21, 1835.

MY DEAR SIR,

SINCE I committed to the press the slight sketch I have given of my husband's pretensions that I should class his name in the biography of this place, I have found, in an old box of papers, hitherto most unfortunately neglected, a very large mass of journals, letters, &c., written by Mr. Bray; and amongst them several letters from his lamented friend Mr. Mathias. Had I found these before, I should have been furnished with material for a more copious and interesting account than the one already printed that is addressed to you. It is now, alas! too late to do much more than to state the circumstance, and regret the oversight. But as the recent death of Mr. Mathias must make any records connected with him of peculiar interest, I cannot altogether forbear adding a few letters of his to my husband, and some notes respecting the latter that refer to the subjects to which I have before alluded in my previous statements; also an additional note

concerning Walking Stewart, Jerningham, and others, that should have been incorporated with the former extracts from Mr. Bray's papers. The interest of these neglected documents is the only apology I can offer to you for thus giving them out of place; having (as the former sheet is printed off) no other means of making them a part and parcel of my work. I begin with a continuation, for such it is, of Mr. Bray's notices of

WALKING STEWART.

"Mr. Taylor*, and Stewart, the philosopher, commonly called Walking Stewart, spent the evening with me. He is considered by some as mad; and one, in order to prove that he was so, said that none but a madman would have remained on board ship pent up in a hencoop for a fortnight.

"But the truth of the story is, that Stewart was in Persia when there was a bloody war between two nations; where, if he had remained, he would have been obliged to side with one party or the other. He took, therefore, the only method of getting out of the country, which was to solicit the crew of a Turkish vessel to take him on board. They refused it on the score of his being an infidel, and that it would endanger the ship. They contrived, however, a method to cheat the vengeance of their prophet in somewhat the same manner as our stage-coach drivers contrive to evade the act of Parliament limiting the number of passengers, by hanging the frame of a bed at the side of the vessel, in which he was obliged to remain, washed by the spray of the sea, for a week or ten days. This was certainly far

* Then the Editor of the *Sun* paper.

better than being murdered or made prisoner and confined for life or starved to death.

“His character has been attempted, but very unsuccessfully, to be introduced on the stage, in the after-piece of ‘Hartford Bridge,’ though it has been generally supposed to allude to Browne. This dramatic hero talks of having skipped over mountains, laments his having lost his *walking* travels, and that he would make no scruple to rob a church, &c.; also of his being fond of singing in different languages; which Stewart did once at a meeting of the Charter House.

“His most peculiar doctrine seems to be a transmigration not of souls but bodies; or a perpetual reciprocation of atoms. He says that the works of Bacon contain only the *seeds* of knowledge.”

In a paper, dated “July 1st, 1803,” Mr. Bray’s notes contain the following particulars respecting that celebrated wit and poet

MR. JERNINGHAM.

“I this day dined with my friend Mr. Taylor, at a restaurateur’s, where he introduced me to Mr. Jerningham, the poet. He is about sixty years of age; but his florid complexion makes him look some years younger. He mixes a good deal with the first circles, and indeed is almost every night to be found at the Opera. He has also a general acquaintance among the literary world, of which he is himself a distinguished ornament. His conversation is stored with anecdotes of men of letters, from which, indeed, the biography of each might be collected.

“Talking of Pope and of Martha Blount, the poet’s favourite, he said that she was his cousin; and agreed that she treated Pope with cruelty.

Mr. Jerningham was introduced to her on his return from abroad, at the time of the coronation, and recollects he was requested not to mention the name of Mr. Pope in her hearing. He has frequently been rowed by the waterman, who was accustomed to take Pope, almost every fine day, to Lady ——'s, whence he returned home in her chariot. He always dressed in black, with a bag wig, and when the weather was chilly, sat in a chair in the boat, with a covering similar to those used by the porters in their masters' halls. The poet at length became so irritable, that he gave a general order not to let a gentleman be admitted who frequently came to see him, because he talked too much for him. At last, however, the gentleman introduced himself among a party; but as Pope never spoke to him, he was obliged to give up his acquaintance. We formed the plan of paying a visit together to the poet's villa; and Mr. Taylor insisted that when it took place, we should each write some verses on the subject. And, in allusion to our present meeting, he made an extemporaneous parody on Dryden, beginning,

‘ Three poets in three distant counties born,’ &c.

“ Bishop Hurd and Potter, the translator of *Æschylus*, were tutors to the Prince of Wales. The latter only retains the prince's friendship, and whenever he comes to town is constantly welcomed at Carlton House. Potter, for the greatest part of his life, was in the most indigent circumstances; and as he was curate to Hurd, Mr. Jerningham, on a vacancy of the Laureateship, wrote to the latter, requesting he would recommend him to his Majesty for the situation. The Bishop said, when he had an opportunity, he would mention it at the levee, though

he might have had an audience on the subject. By this neglect, Warton was appointed, who, though in no good circumstances at that time himself, said that had he known of the application he would have waived the appointment in favour of Potter. The latter, now in his old age, is in the happiest circumstances, being (through the Prince) made Prebendary of Norwich Cathedral.

“Whilst the Prince was under the tuition of Hurd, and lived at Kew, commenced his acquaintance with Mrs. Robinson, who took a house in the neighbourhood. When the evening fixed for a rendezvous was come, the Prince was sure, by some excuse or other, to send the bishop early to bed, well knowing that he would soon fall asleep; then, with a silk ladder, he climbed the garden wall, and was received on the other side by his mistress.”

The following notes from Mr. Bray's papers, dated January 15th, 1804, respecting Sir Francis Bourgeois, are curious; I therefore give them a place:—

“Having more than once met Sir Francis Bourgeois, he the other day offered to show me Mr. Desenfant's pictures. I accordingly called by appointment this morning at No. 39, Charlotte Street, Portland Place, where he and Mr. Desenfant reside. Two or three gentlemen were there at the same time. One of them, a Mr. Howard, or Troward, (I do not know which,) a lawyer, was present. He was principally concerned in the management of Hastings's trial. So many MS. books were necessary on that occasion, that they were carried to Westminster in two carts. He kept twelve or fourteen clerks constantly reading, in order to mark passages, digest,

and give him an abstract of their contents. Burke was at his house for ten or twelve hours almost every day during that period, and has stayed in his house for a month together. I understand he has a small but highly valuable collection of pictures, some of which Bonaparte wished to purchase of him.

“To return to Mr. Desenfant’s collection. The first picture Sir Francis showed to me was a nymph, by Titian; for which, with some others, Le Brun, on the part of Bonaparte, offered him a *carte blanche*. Perhaps it may be worth six or eight thousand pounds. She is represented as asleep in a recumbent posture, and naked. Cupid bends over her pointing with his dart, by which we are to suppose that the painter would give us to understand that Love was the subject of her dream. It is the Venus de Medici in a different posture, and as remarkable for its colouring as for its correctness of drawing. It is kept covered with a silk curtain. On my remarking that, like the Venus de Medici, the face was not so perfect as the rest of the body, Sir Francis remarked that, for wise purposes, our tastes were very different. This Venus had dark hair; his taste was, he confessed, for very fair women with red, I suppose *auburn* hair, which he thought, with a little *powder*, possessed a most bewitching appearance. Women of this description were generally of a fair and delicate complexion; but I remarked that they were also commonly freckled and rather coarse. The latter, he said, might, and should in all women, be corrected by essences and perfumes. In this room is a Madonna and child, with a basket, in the corner, very small, which every one allows to be an undoubted Correggio. In the next are four by

Murillo, the Martyrdom of St. Sebastian by Guido Reni, &c.

“Talking of statues, Sir Francis said that Mr. Townley, of Westminster, had the finest private collection in the kingdom: of which what struck him the most was the bust of Minerva, with her helmet and breast-plate of bronze, that by a kind of contrast gave life and animation to the whole. He allowed, however, that this taste may be carried too far, as it was amongst the ancients, who occasionally painted or enamelled the eyes of their statues. This he considered as a false taste. I compared it to a wax doll, whose eyes are made to move by springs. A gentleman present, however, differed from him, and said that the idea from seeing statues with cavities in the eyes, of their being filled up with enamelled ones, was wrong, as they were filled with precious stones, generally sapphires; which produced an effect altogether astonishing. No one could look at it an instant without being so struck as to be obliged to recede some paces. It was not from its resemblance to nature, but from the dazzling effect of its appearance.

“Sir Francis said that there were, he understood, some of the finest pictures in the world at the Escorial in Spain. But the finest of them, consisting of about *twenty* Venuses by Titian, were seldom shown; and indeed some of them had been burnt by the priests from an over-scrupulousness, an idea of their evil tendency. On the whole, however, he agreed that it might affect the generality of persons, as might also statues; but that artists seldom or never experienced any injury from such subjects.

“ One room consisted of Poussins, containing about eight or nine ; a thing believed to be unparalleled.

“ In the drawing room is a *chef d'œuvre* of Cuyp ; but in another a cattle piece, by Potter, superior to anything of the former. Claude was born in the first year of the sixteenth century, so that his own proficiency in painting, and that of the age in which he lived, may be known together. Sir Francis, at sight, can tell to a year or two when his works were executed. Indeed I think that his own style resembles that of Claude, when he painted with a clear and not a glowing tint. The pictures are moved on hinges, and some even draw out into a good light by means of iron supports,—a most excellent plan !”

From some conversation with a literary gentleman in town, respecting the celebrated French poet, De Lille. Mr. Bray received much information. The following he noted down :—

“ The Abbé de Lille is not quite blind, as it is generally reported of him. His vivacity in company is very engaging, which is increased by his rich fund of anecdote. With respect to his writings he is impatient of criticism. His undertaking the translation of Milton was at the suggestion of some English gentlemen, who, about a dozen in number, agreed to give him, on its completion, one hundred pounds. One of them called on him soon after, and found him with a wretched little edition of Milton, the text of which was so small that, had he continued to read it, it would probably have soon rendered him quite blind. He had also a French prose translation. The gentleman made him a present

of Newton's edition and a Latin translation, from which he acknowledged he had derived great benefit. He was at first greatly at a loss to translate the allegory of Sin and Death, since the personification in French must have been entirely reversed; *sin* (*le péché*) being masculine; and death (*la mort*) feminine. However, he at length supplied those personages by *Le Trépas* and *La Révolte*. De Lille had not before sufficiently appreciated the genius of Milton; but soon found reason to consider him the greatest poet that ever existed. The translation, in parts, is remarkably fine, but in others equally censurable; and though those passages have been pointed out to him he would never correct or alter them. The French language labours under the disadvantage of not being able to express, in a concise or even elegant manner, the different positions of the body. How could the French translate—‘She *sat* like Patience on a monument;’ ‘*Stood* like a tower;’ ‘*Rides* in the whirlwind and directs the storm?’ &c. In De Lille's translation of Virgil's *Georgics*, it was objected to him that he had omitted the name of *Mecænas* in the opening of the first book. He confessed its impropriety, but did not alter it.”

The following notes respecting Mr. Mathias I extract from Mr. Bray's notes, which he heads as

“MEMORABILIA.

“27th January, 1807.—In a conversation which I had with Mr. Mathias on Italian literature, he informed me that Gray, though so great a poet himself, and an admirer of the poets of Italy, was unacquainted with the works of Guidi, Menzini, Filicaja, &c., and indeed of almost all that are con-

tained in his 'Componimenti Lirici.' He had once in his possession the commonplace-book of Gray; and it contained very copious extracts from the 'Comentarj' of Crescimbeni. He told me he could gratify me with a sight of Gray's handwriting, and fetched from his library a fasciculus, being a kind of commentary in English on Pindar and Aristophanes. It was written remarkably neat and plain, but rather stiff, and bearing evident marks of being written slowly. It had a great resemblance to the Italian mode of writing; every part of the letters being nearly of an equal thickness. He wrote always with a crow quill.

"Observing no obliterations or erasures, and indeed only one or two interlineations, I remarked that it must have been a fair copy, and wondered how he could have taken so much pains, unless he had intended it for publication. But Mr. Mathias assured me that Gray was so averse to publication, that, had not a surreptitious copy of his 'Elegy in a Country Churchyard' appeared, he never would have published it; and, even when he did, it was without his name. The reason that he was so correct was that he never committed anything to paper till he had most maturely considered it beforehand.

"Mr. Mathias explained to me how he was so well acquainted with these particulars respecting Gray, by informing me that he was most intimate with Mr. Nichols, the familiar friend and executor of Gray, who had lent him the MSS. On my lamenting that they were never made public, he said that it was not for want of his most earnest solicitation; but that Mr. Nichols was an old man, and wished even to conceal that he was in possession of any such

precious reliques, lest he should be plagued with requests to have them copied, or at least to show them. He therefore in a manner enjoined me to secrecy, and I consequently commit the present memoranda to paper merely for my own satisfaction, that by an occasional inspection the pleasure I received from this conversation may be more forcibly brought to my recollection. For the same reason, and as those MSS. are never likely to be made public, I shall enter more at large upon the consideration of them ; at least as much as a cursory inspection during a morning call would permit.

“ As Gray always affixed the date to every thing he wrote, which, as Mr. Mathias informed me, was also the custom of Petrarch, it seems that he wrote his remarks on Pindar at rather an early age. I think the date was 1747. It is very closely written. The Greek characters are remarkably neat : he begins with the date of the composition, and takes into his consideration almost every thing connected with it, both chronologically and historically. The notes of the scholiasts do not escape him ; and he is so minute as to direct his attention to almost every expression. He appears to have reconciled many apparent incongruities, and to have elucidated many difficulties. I the more lament these valuable annotations remain unpublished, as they would prove that, in the opinion of so great a man, the English language is in every respect adequate to express every thing that criticism the most erudite can require. It presented to my eye a most gratifying novelty to see the union of Greek and English, and to find that they harmonized together as well as Greek and Latin.

“The remarks on the plays of Aristophanes were so minute, not only expressing when they were written and acted, but when they were revived, that, as Mr. Mathias justly observed, one would think he was reading an account of some modern comedy, instead of the dramatic composition of about two thousand years old. Gray also left behind him very copious remarks upon Plato, which had also formerly been in Mr. Mathias’s hands; likewise large collections respecting the customs of the ancients, &c. And so multifarious and minute were his investigations, that he directed his attention even to the supellex, or household furniture of the ancients, collecting together all the passages in the classics that had any reference to the subject.

“Mr. Mathias showed me likewise many sheets copied by Gray from some Italian author; also, I believe, an historical composition, and a great many genealogies, of which Gray was particularly fond. On my remarking that I wished Gray had written less genealogies and more poetry, he informed me that the reason he had written so little poetry was from the great exertion (which he made no reserve in confessing) that it cost him in the labour of composition. Mr. Mathias informed me that he had seen the original copy of Gray’s ‘Ode on the Progress of Poesy:’ that there were not so many alterations as he expected; which was evidently owing to his method of long previous meditation; and that some of the lines were written three or four times over; and then, what is not always the case with an author, the best was always adopted.

“He said there was nothing of which Gray had not the profoundest knowledge, at least of such

subjects as come under the denomination of learning, except mathematics ; of which, as well as his friend Mason, he was as completely ignorant, and which he used frequently to lament. He was acquainted with botany, but hardly seems to have paid it the compliment it deserves, when he said he learnt it merely for the sake of sparing himself the trouble of thinking."

I shall here insert a few of the letters, already named, from Mr. Mathias, as they are so intimately connected with many points of import in the biographical sketch formerly communicated to you. Brief as are these letters, they nevertheless contain passages that show the mind of the man in private life whose genius enriched the literary world with the 'Pursuits of Literature,' and whose fine taste and profound knowledge of Italian poetry has conferred such essential benefit on all who would study or can appreciate the most beautiful productions of a foreign land.

The first is addressed to my husband soon after his appointment to the Vicarage of Tavistock.

"TO THE REV. E. A. BRAY.

"Middle Scotland Yard, Whitehall, Oct. 21, 1811.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"YOUR obliging letter of the 9th instant came to me a few days ago, but I am ignorant of the person who was so kind as to leave it at my house. It gives me the most sensible satisfaction and pleasure to hear that the Duke of Bedford has presented you to the vicarage of Tavistock, &c.; and I trust it is only an earnest of what his Grace may intend to do for you hereafter. At present it ap-

pears to me as desirable a situation as you could wish; but I should be glad if he could obtain for you hereafter a prebend in some cathedral, which is a piece of preferment of the most eligible kind, and tenable with any living. Pray bear this in mind, and let your friends solicit for it to him or any other powerful interest, and not to lose the chance or probability of success for want of application.

“ I am glad that you intend to avail yourself of the Bishop of Norwich’s offer to ordain you priest at Christmas, as it should not be delayed; and it can never be accomplished in a more pleasing manner than by that excellent and amiable man. I shall be most happy to see you when you come up to town. I had hopes of visiting Devonshire this summer; but if I should live and be able to come next year, I shall wish to avail myself of your kind invitation to pay you a visit. It would give me pleasure to meet Mr. and Mrs. Baskerfield at any time or place.

“ You talked of printing (hereafter) some of Bishop Taylor’s sermons, *modernized*: I should rather recommend to your consideration whether it might not be more expedient to call them *abridged*. He is a writer of such acknowledged eloquence and learning, that it might be rather thought unnecessary, at least, if not presumptuous, to modernize such compositions. The removal of a few quaint expressions and abridging the matter, which is too copious, would answer every valuable purpose. I have no doubt that your sacred profession will prove a source of comfort, satisfaction, and honour to yourself, and of utility to those whom you are to superintend and instruct. I have one more wish, and

a most material one for you, which I hope I may shortly hear, that you are *not single* :

‘Sed lepidâ faveat conjuge castus Hymen.’

“I shall entertain no doubts on this subject. If I had the pleasure of being acquainted with your relations, I should desire to be remembered to them.

“Believe me always

“Yours very sincerely,

“T. J. MATHIAS.”

“TO THE REV. E. A. BRAY.

“*Middle Scotland Yard, Whitehall, Nov. 9, 1811.*

“MY DEAR SIR,

“You are very obliging in your remembrance of me. I received the woodcocks and the golden plovers in good condition, and excellent birds they were. When I take my gun I fear shall not be able to offer you such admirable game; but I shall be happy if I could be of the least service to you in this part of the world in any other way.

“I am glad you think of London in your way to Norwich, as I believe you cannot do better than by accepting the offer of the Bishop of Norwich and completing your ordination as priest. * * * *

* * I have nothing to reply to your explanation relating to Bishop Taylor; if your endeavours to adapt and compress them have been so successful in your congregation, *punctum omne tulisti*. The only danger, in point of composition, of being *too* conversant in writers of that age, arises from the quaintness of their style, and the peculiarities of

their metaphor, sometimes carried to a greater extent than could be wished. The vigour of their thoughts, and the strains of their eloquence are seldom attained by the moderns. I believe there was more real piety among them than among the generality of the moderns. It is very meritorious in you to have laboured with so much success, and to have newly made up the *ancient wardrobe*, as you term it.

“ I shall be very happy to see you when you come to London, and I have no doubt that you will pass a useful, and, consequently, a happy life. It was well said, ‘ nisi utile est quod facimus, stulta est gloria.’ With my best respects to your family, and the most sincere wishes for your constant and unceasing welfare, believe me

“ Yours always,

“ Most sincerely,

“ T. J. MATHIAS.”

The following letter from Mr. Mathias contains so feeling an allusion to a great private, as well as public calamity of the time, that there needs no apology for giving it here a place.

“ TO THE REV. E. A. BRAY.

“ *Middle Scotland Yard, Whitehall, May 25, 1812.*

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ I AM very much obliged to you for your kind attention to me, and I beg to make my best acknowledgments for the two letters which I received at different times from you. It gives me a particular pleasure to know that you feel such sincere

satisfaction in the change of your profession, and I am convinced that our good bishop was happy to admit so able and zealous a minister into the Church of England. I believe that if you do not force yourself into exertions rather beyond your strength, you will accomplish all the important objects which you have in view, and fulfil the great purpose of your life, the highest which any man can propose to himself, and, as I believe, the most satisfactory beyond all comparison.

“I am sure that you have felt, in common with every good and reflecting man, the late great national and private loss, which has flung affliction, dismay, and consternation throughout the country, from the atrocious act which we abhor and deplore in the assassination of the most excellent, virtuous, and able man we had amongst us, and from whom, through Providence, we all looked for the preservation of the kingdom, and the direction of the public affairs to a happy issue. The loss of this great man is irreparable in the truest sense; and to those who knew him, as I have done nearly all his life, it is a loss which no words can describe. The noblest testimony to his merits, services, and virtues cannot be made too high; nor can the family of the truly great Spencer Perceval ever be esteemed, or dignified, or provided for in too ample and conspicuous a manner. It is a subject on which it is difficult to speak as we must feel. We know not yet the extent and full importance of his loss, nor can we ever express our abhorrence and dismay at ‘the deep damnation of his taking off,’ in words and terms too strong.

“I have at last finished and printed the poem to which you alluded in your letter; and I have endea-

voured to introduce the Lycidas of Milton on the banks of the Arno, and hope he will be received as I wish. I trust you will accept the little volume which I send as a mark of my esteem and regard for you, and of my knowledge of your predilection for the British and the Tuscan muses. You must not relinquish your classical recreations in the intervals of your serious engagements. Above all, attend to your health, which is beyond any price, and by sparing yourself you will prolong your power of doing good.

"I still flatter myself that I shall be able, in the course of the summer, to avail myself of your kind wish to see me in Devonshire; and when I can name the time, I will give you a line to know if it will be convenient to you. I beg my best compliments to all your family, and hope that I shall hear that you are quite recovered from your indisposition.

"Believe me, my dear Sir,

"Ever yours most truly,

"T. J. MATHIAS."

The next letter, here inserted, contains a Latin inscription by Mr. Mathias. It was written in consequence of the circumstance I am about to state. In the years 1812 and 1813 Mr. Bray had been in so deplorable a state of debility, that he was for some months unable to do any duty in his church. To a friend (afterwards his curate for many years), the late worthy and Rev. Richard Vyvyan Willesford, who did duty for him, Mr. Bray felt desirous of presenting a silver cup in token of gratitude.

The cup was made by Rundle and Bridge. Entertaining a high opinion of Mr. Mathias's critical judgment in Latin composition, Mr. Bray consulted him respecting the inscription for it, when the following letter was sent in reply to this application to his classical friend.

"TO THE REV. E. A. BRAY.

" Middle Scotland Yard, Whitehall, April 12, 1813.

" MY DEAR SIR,

" YOU are very kind to me, and I am most sensible of it, particularly so as I regret sincerely that I had mislaid your former letter, which I had intended to answer long since. Your goodness and attention however have relieved me, and I no longer delay acknowledging both your favours. It gives me great uneasiness to hear that you have been so indifferent, but I hope that you will henceforth remember that it is as great and essential a part of your duty to take care of your own health and spirits as to perform what is incumbent on you professionally. Too much zeal must not be suffered to destroy your constitution. Your life is most valuable, and the benefit of your labours should be extended and not abridged, which must be the case if you will not as religiously attend to your own welfare as to that of others. I am very glad that you have taken your assistant, and no real friend of yours will consider it as prudent, if you do not measure your exertions by your strength and natural capability to perform them. If they are too great, or if ever any part of them is too fatiguing, you should, for the time requisite *abstain wholly*

from the exercise of your function, however painful to yourself, as I am convinced that it would be. But it must be done, if you would live, and regain an *establishment* of health. ‘Unum corpus unamque vitam’ (the expression is from Tacitus) is all we have *here*, and they must be managed with discretion while Providence continues them to us. We must not shake the glass before the hour is run.

“I will flatter myself that I may be able, in the course of the year, to pay you a visit, and make a *pilgrimage* together to the *Saint of the Mount*, to whom I owe it*. But still, various circumstances do not permit me to be sanguine. If, however, I shall be able, I will let you know in time, if it should be convenient to you to increase my pleasure and satisfaction by your company.

“As to the cup which you destine for your friend in gratitude, if the following words should meet your own ideas, I would propose it, but entirely submit it to your judgment :—

‘Ob Salutem Propriam
Amicitiae Officiis
Recuperatam
Salutem Invicem
Sed Integram Sed Continuum
[here the name of your friend]
Gratissimo Animo Propinat
E. A. BRAY.’

“You must correct any fault you may discover in it with your usual candour. There should be no punctuation at all in the inscription, and every word should begin with a capital letter. With my sincerest wishes for the perfect re-establishment of

* St. Michael's Mount, Cornwall.

your health, to enable you to fulfil your ministry, and every other duty, with that satisfaction, and comfort, and honour, which you merit, believe me

“Yours always faithfully,

“T. J. MATHIAS.”

“TO THE REV. E. A. BRAY.

“*Middle Scotland Yard, Whitehall, Oct. 21, 1815.*

“MY DEAR SIR,

YOU are very kind in your remembrance of me, and I return you many thanks for your letter which I received a few days ago. I wish you could have given me a more perfect account of your health, as I am rather afraid, from what you hint, that your strength is not so firmly established, as I sincerely wish it were. I hope you do not exert yourself too much, as I am convinced that your zeal will always be equal to your ability, and that nothing would induce you to relax your sacred labours but the unavoidable interruptions of health and usual bodily complaints. You know it is sometimes advisable to draw back a little to *make advances* with greater alacrity. St. Paul is full of military allusions, and I wish that you would keep some of them in mind in your *personal* exertions in the great cause, that you may be enabled to proceed with caution and with consequent vigour in your course. I should conceive that you will perform an acceptable service by offering to the public what you intend; and I have no doubt that you have been careful to preserve those able expressions, and that ancient dignity of the style for which Bishop Taylor and some of our elder divines are so conspicuous. Prolivity was their chief defect, and perhaps repetition of the same ideas in *continuity* may be among their errors; but they are a glorious

company of primitive apostles, and an honour to the Church of England. Indeed you have great merit; and you will feel that testimony *within*, of which it may be said, 'Pluris est quam omnium Sermo.'

"It is not my lot ever to be engaged in anything that is very important, but I am not at all times absolutely indolent. Last year I published a complete edition of Mr. Gray's works in two large volumes in quarto; the second of which was entirely new, and from his original MSS., which I selected and arranged. Indeed it was the labour of some years. I lately, by the particular wish of some friends, published separately my observations on the character and writings of Mr. Gray, as they stood continued in the postscript to the whole work, and in some other parts of the publication. As it is but a small volume, I am inclined to hope that you will gratify me by accepting it, as a sincere mark of my esteem and regard for you.

"Believe me ever most sincerely yours,

"THOS. J. MATHIAS.

"P. S. It would make me very happy if I could hope that there were a probability of my seeing you a prebendary or canon of one of our principal cathedrals, as no one would deserve the dignity and distinction more than yourself. Remember the care of your health,—how important it is! Do less in order to do more, is not advice necessary to many people, but it is to you."

"TO THE REV. E. A. BRAY.

"Reading, Nov. 13th, 1815.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I HAVE received your letter with great pleasure, and particularly so as you speak favour-

ably of your health, and that you are convinced of the necessity of sparing yourself, and of taking that care of yourself which may have a tendency to strengthen your constitution. Too much fatigue of application is generally fatal in its consequences, and rather retards what it is so desirable to promote. I am glad the little volume I sent you came safe, as I know you are an admirer of the great poet, and I wished that you should have the delineation of his extensive and diversified erudition added to the exertions of his genius.

“ You are very good in offering me the sight of your alterations or adaptations of the sermons of some of our elder divines, but I really am not a sufficient judge of the propriety of such an undertaking, and would by no means take upon me such a decision, and therefore must leave it to your judgment. I said in my last letter what I thought, and that it was something hazardous to *amend* that nervous and antique eloquence which distinguishes Jeremy Taylor, Barrow, and their fellows; but to *abridge* their discourses, by omissions, where they are prolix and diffuse, might be done to advantage. I believe it is a most useful and improving exercise for you or any man of talents and ingenuity for their own private use or advantage, and occasionally to preach some of them contracted in *this* manner; but to publish them requires a pause or a consideration. Some expressions of Cicero may be applied to these great writers. Of either of them it may be said: ‘*Quis gravior in laudendo? in vituperando acerbior? in sententiis argutior? in docendo edisserendoque subtilior? quem florem aut quod lumen eloquentiæ non habet? Antiquior interdum est sermo, et quædam forsán horridiora verba; ita enim tunc loquebantur.*’

“Single *words* here and there may be altered with effect, and perhaps very long sentences might (with great judgment and counsel of the *ear*, the *aurium fastidium*) be broken into more than one, and the effect not only preserved but heightened. It is the same with the *language* and style of the translation of the Bible, as it stands at present. I never yet saw any new version or alteration of it which (though it might more fully explain the meaning of the original in some few instances) did not detract from the majesty and the simplicity of our great translation, which is, and will be, with the the standard of the English in its original strength, energy, and dignity. But on this point there are diversities of opinion ; but I never could change my own on this subject. What *you have* done has been of infinite use to yourself and to your hearers ; but I am merely speaking in a critical point of view, and as to the general effect, when such writings are submitted to the public eye, and not as discourses delivered from the pulpit. But pray collect the judgment of your friends ; I only have said my own private thoughts, with the sincerest approbation of your honourable and useful diligence, which cannot fail of its best reward.

“I shall always be happy to hear of your welfare, and cannot but cherish an expectation, as well as a *hope*, that you may soon obtain that promotion in your profession, to which your labours and the piety of your exertions justly entitle you.

“Believe me always, my dear Sir,

“Yours most faithfully,

“T. J. MATHIAS.

“P. S. I shall return to town in a few days.”

I find, with the above letter, the rough copy of an answer to it so connected with the subject, that I am sure you will agree with me that it ought not to be omitted:—

“ TO T. J. MATHIAS, Esq.

“ *Tavistock, Dec. 7th, 1815.*

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ I DELAYED writing in hopes of having an opportunity of saving you the expense, if not the trouble, of a letter. But, being disappointed, I can no longer refrain from thanking you for your friendly attention to my last. No one can feel greater admiration for the language of our Bible translation than myself. I am so sensible of its euphony that, in reading it, I try to give effect to every letter, not altering even a *doeth* into doth. My estimation of the book of Common Prayer is little less. And next to these every true churchman must venerate the Homilies. Now the Bishop of Lincoln, in his ‘Elements of Christian Theology,’ vol. ii. p. 537, recommends the select Homilies ‘rendered in a modern style,’ which have been published by Sir A. Gordon. Surely there is more presumption in this than in altering the language of any of our old divines. But as I have always considered you as an instrument in the hands of Providence that placed me in my present situation, so I still am willing to believe that I am to learn, through you, that my plan had better be laid aside, or at any rate for the present be postponed; and surely, whoever publishes *sermons* should be actuated, not by his own wishes, but the will of God.

“ I thank you for your kind opinion, that I am not undeserving cathedral preferment, but the interest of

the Duke of Bedford lies not in that direction ; and, indeed, when I consider his numerous family, I have reason to think that I have already experienced the extent of his Grace's patronage. I am convinced, also, that I have already more than I deserve ; but if anything would excite my ambition for such a situation, it would be that I should then have greater opportunities than I now enjoy of following your recommendation in applying for advice to my friends (by such I understand clerical brethren), who are generally pretty numerous, as indeed they ought to be, in the neighbourhood of a bishop's palace. But even this I shall be well content to forego, if you will permit me occasionally to consult yourself.

“ I remain, my dear Sir, &c. &c.

“ E. A. BRAY.”

LETTER XLII.

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQ.

CONTENTS :—Some omitted notices, wherefore here added—Roborough Down—Anecdote of a sailor's good fortune—Story of one who was more cautious than wise—Kilworthy—Tiddebrook—Horrabridge—Huckworthy—Walkhampton—Morwel House ; all picturesque places—Hill Bridge—Kelly—Ancient stained glass—Saxon coffin—Ramsdown Common—Kairns—Sortridge—Judge Glanville and his lady—Their portraits discovered—An old chest—Holwell—Picturesque scenery—Conclusion.

Vicarage, Tavistock, Oct. 23d, 1835.

MY DEAR SIR,

IN the multiplicity of papers, journals, &c., written by Mr. Bray, that I have had to consult in the progress of these letters, interrupted as were my pursuits by ill health and many pressing avocations, it is not wonderful that some things should have escaped me that ought to have been noticed in former communications. As my letters to you are now nearly printed, it is too late entirely to remedy these omissions. But a few brief extracts from Mr. Bray's journals, concerning places of interest in our more immediate vicinity, must not be left out. Here, then, I give them, relying on your kind consideration to excuse what has been an error of oversight, not of intention.

In the road from Tavistock to Plymouth the traveller passes over a high tract of land, commanding some most delightful views, called Roborough

Down, where is situated that remarkable insulated rock, of superstitious import, which I chose as the scene of an adventure in my tale before alluded to. Concerning this spot, Mr. Bray has recorded in one of his old journals some amusing particulars. "This rock being of a large size, and insulated in the midst of an extensive down, is in itself remarkable; but more so from the following circumstance that is said to have happened there not many years ago. A sailor going from Tavistock to join his ship at Plymouth, sat down to rest himself in one of the hollows of the rock, and insensibly fell asleep. On waking he continued his journey, but found he had left his purse behind him. He had not time, however, to return for it; and after having made a voyage to the East Indies, on again passing the spot, three years after, he had the curiosity to look for his purse; which to his surprise, as well as joy, he was so fortunate as to recover.

"Another singular circumstance is said to have happened on this down. A blacksmith of Tavistock, on taking home a jack that he had repaired, was benighted. Finding that his burden retarded his progress, and recollecting he had heard that if you set a watch over a thing it is perfectly safe, he was so ignorant as to give a wrong interpretation to it; and taking out his own watch, actually left it with the jack by the roadside. Early on the following morning, probably before any one had passed, he returned to the spot, and found that neither of them had been carried off, attributing it, no doubt, to the efficacy of the preventive."

Respecting Kilworthy, before slightly noticed, Mr. Bray makes the following observations in his

journal:—"It is about a mile and a half from Tavistock. Though somewhat modernized, it still retains features of the ancient structure. And there, too, may yet be found some vestiges of the old style of gardening, when uniformity was the sole object of attention, and when the straight, formal terrace was preferred to the more natural diversity of an undulating surface. A few walnut and beech trees, of great apparent antiquity, are seen about the house; and the rarity, if not total absence of the former in the neighbourhood renders them still more remarkable. There are also other trees, principally firs, which, from being so thick together, seem to have been planted more for shelter than effect. And though from its elevated situation it is certainly exposed, the hand of taste, by judiciously thinning them, might let in some of the distant scenery, particularly the bold rocky tors of Dartmoor, without much sacrifice of comfort. At the bottom of a descent from the house is some pleasing sylvan scenery, which requires no art to make additions to its beauties. The Walla Brook, immortalized by Browne, is here surmounted with a little foot bridge, and as the key-stone represents a laureated head, one might be allowed, perhaps, to fancy it was in honour of this too-much neglected bard, whose sweetness of numbers was truly remarkable in an age when harshness and discordancy seem to have been studiously affected. The episode of the 'Loves of the Walla and the Tavy' is the most pleasing of all his compositions; though it may be objected, perhaps, that it is too Ovidian.

"I may here also notice Tiddebrook, situated about a mile and a half from our town, on the old

Plymouth road. It is a curious ancient building, having its porch carried up in the form of a tower, embattled at the top. The rest of the structure has the appearance of little better than a farm house. It probably belonged to the abbey; but I have not been able to collect any information respecting it.

“About a mile farther is the village of Horrabridge, above mentioned, which receives its name from a bridge of three pointed arches of irregular size; it is picturesque when viewed from the road, where some fine old trees throw their feathery branches across the stream.

“The scenery at Huckworthy also well repays the trouble, not to say danger, of the descent that leads to it. A bridge of two arches crosses a rapid stream; but I was vexed to find that a great deal of the ivy that used to hang in festoons from the top of these arches had been stripped off. Above the bridge is a mill, the water from which, white with foam, falls into a pool, from its depth, of the blackest colour. Below it is the machinery of a mine, which crosses the river; and the wheel, in perpetual motion, is one of large diameter. The hill I had just descended, with some cottages interspersed amid wood, presented a striking object, and the varied outline of Dartmoor tors formed a pleasing horizon to complete the picture.

“Resolving to explore the river at another opportunity, I proceeded to the village of Walkhampton, and finding there nothing worthy attention, determined to pay a visit to the church. This is situated at some distance from the village, on an elevated spot; and being surrounded with fields

inclosed with stone hedges, I had great difficulty to find my way to it. The pinnacles of the tower are remarkably elegant, having a kind of corona or battlement, out of which they spring in a taper form, enriched with well-defined ornaments, and surmounted with a cross of the same material. The view from the churchyard is strikingly grand, commanding a great extent of country, of which the bold tors of Dartmoor form no inconsiderable part.

“Morwel House, in this neighbourhood, deserves some mention, as it was formerly the hunting-seat of the Abbot of Tavistock: it is a quadrangular building, in the Gothic style; the gateway very similar to those of the abbey: it has a groined ceiling of freestone, which appears to have been plastered over and washed with yellow.”

Of that most delightful scenc, *Hill Bridge*, I find the following notice in Mr. Bray's Journal:—

“About a mile from Peter Tavy is Cudlipp Town. The road runs along the ridge of the steep that hangs over the Tavy, on the opposite banks of which, well covered with foliage, is a striking view of some bold rocks, projecting from a shelving wood. They are called Brimhill Tors. Cudlipp Town is a small scattered village, through which passes the road that leads to *Hill Bridge*, about a mile distant. The tors beyond it form the finest outline (being varied in point of size and distance, and rough with rocks on their summits) of any series of heights in Devonshire.

“Hill Bridge is well worthy attention from its singularity, being composed of four perfectly flat arches, if I may be allowed the expression, formed of long flat stones placed side by side, with their

ends resting on the piers. The parapet is but ten or twelve inches high, made merely by similar stones lying along upon the others. It is one of the simplest bridges I almost ever saw, and quite in harmony with the surrounding scene. Below it the water is dammed back by a weir, for the purpose of carrying a leet to Wheel Friendship Mine. At some distance higher up the stream, another leet is taken up for another mine adjoining."

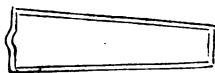
Notes on excursions in the neighbourhood of Tavistock:—

" KELLY.

"On the 3d of July, 1833, having lately visited it as Dean Rural, I took Mrs. Bray to see the painted glass in the church at Kelly; which, though much mutilated, is by far the best, and most in quantity of any in this vicinity. On mentioning it to Mr. Johnes, of Bradstone, he told me that some of my old friends, now no more, of the Kelly family, used to amuse themselves, when boys, with what they called shying at the heads of the Apostles. And certainly one of the windows gives proofs of it; for there are two, if not three figures, on which instead of heads, a modern glazier has inserted as many round pieces of plain glass: so that these young iconoclasts seem to have shown some skill in the decollation of these martyrs. And here, too, the glazier showed more skill, or at least more* taste, than in other parts of these windows, where, probably, as the pieces best suited in point of size, he has not hesitated to join part of the limbs of one figure with that of another, arms and legs promiscuously sprouting from different parts of the body,

the former often resting on the ground, and the latter in the air. Some of the borders, consisting of flowers and foliage, are of the most tasteful patterns and delicate execution. Were the moss on the outside carefully removed, the colours would be the most brilliant within.

“Workmen were employed in taking down the south porch, in order to build a vestry. In removing the pavement, they found immediately under it a stone coffin, probably Saxon. It is rather remarkable that, on visiting it a few days before, as Dean Rural, I said to one of the workmen, who informed me that the porch was to be taken down, that the arch had somewhat the appearance of being Saxon, though certainly of a very rude description, and that possibly it might be as well to preserve the stones, and use them in the same form, for the entrance of the vestry. Over the inner arch was a small corbel or bracket, which the workmen told me Mr. Johnes, who had lately been there, seemed to think might have supported the figure of the person buried beneath, and that he might have been the founder of the church. However this may be, the coffin is certainly of great antiquity, having a recess for the head, and is of the following form:—



“It is of freestone, five feet eleven inches in length, seventeen inches across the shoulders, sixteen in the breast, and nine at the feet.

“On our return, we observed some heaps of stones and of earth in a field near the road, and, getting out of the carriage, went to examine them,

in order to decide whether they were only such, or kairns and barrows. Which of these they are I am still, however, unable to determine; but I am most inclined to believe that they are monuments of antiquity, and not burrows for rabbits, or heaps of stones accumulated from clearing the ground; for the field has been not many years since inclosed from Ram's Down Common; and stones instead of being there collected together since the inclosure, have probably been removed thence to make the adjoining road. Indeed many of the rocks are of too great dimensions to have thus been removed for the purposes of agriculture. The kairns or heaps of stones are two in number. Of the barrows there are eleven; one twenty-three paces in circumference. As far as I then had the opportunity of examining, they were principally, if not entirely composed of earth. It is not improbable, therefore, that a battle was fought on this common, and that these are the memorials of it: the kairns might have been for the chieftains, and the barrows for their followers who fell in the battle.

“SORTRIDGE.

“On the first of August, 1833, we went to Sortridge, having understood that the picture of Judge Glanville was there which formerly belonged to my father. The information was not correct; but we found there not only a picture of the judge, but also of his lady. The former bore on it

‘Ætatis suæ 55.’ The latter, ‘Ætatis suæ 54.’

1598

1598.

1727

1728.’

“Hence we collected that the pictures were originally painted in the former year, and retouched, or rather re-painted in the latter. Indeed, we were

informed that, not many years ago, a mere boy was suffered to show his skill in restoring them; and they certainly bear most decisive proofs of each of these operations. Dame Glanville could never have been handsome; but these disfigurements, by making allowance for them, may possibly make us think that she was handsomer than she was. She appears to have been fond of finery, and this perhaps she thought would be a substitute for beauty. She had many rings on her fingers, and, suspended under her ruff, an immense gold chain.

“In a passage near the entrance porch is a curious old chest, which, owing to its gloomy situation, we could not very minutely examine. We observed that there were many figures in armour, very similar to those that are represented in the triumphs of Maximilian. I am in doubt whether they are painted, or rather drawn, in outline, or burnt in. Though the surface is flat, they almost appear to be in relief, from the circumstance that the background, or rather sky, is cut away and reticulated. I at last distinguished a youth swinging a sword over his head; and, observing a king seated near, conjectured that it might be David essaying his armour. Of this I was afterwards convinced, when we found him, in a second compartment, with his sling in his hand; and in a third, with the head of Goliath.

“In one of my former excursions, I crossed Whitchurch Down, leaving Holwell at my left hand, and, passing near a couple of cottages, which I was informed by a friend were called East and West St. Martin’s, and probably belonged to the Abbey, proceeded towards Huckworthy bridge. My object was now to explore the upper part of the river; and I

accordingly, after passing the bridge, turned up the lane leading to the left, towards the moor. The scenery here is so strikingly wild and picturesque that I do not recollect having seen any more so in South Wales, which I visited about seven or eight years ago. The view is up a valley of considerable extent, through which flows in a rapid and winding course the river Walkham. The hills on each side are bold and steep, possessing every variety of rock and wood ; with here and there tracts of cultivation, the hedges being so irregular as to add a pleasing intricacy to the scene. This is interspersed occasionally with patches of furze in blossom ; and enlivened with the ascending smoke of a few scattered cottages in the most romantic situations.

“ I had never seen the tors of Dartmoor to such advantage ; as I had been mostly accustomed to behold them without any other foreground than the barren moor itself ; where the eye, in going from one tor to another, must pass over the same unvaried blank, unrelieved even by a change of colour. But here, beyond the summit of a hill clothed with the finest wood, peered the still loftier heights of the rocky tors fading into ærial blue. At every step they seemed to lose themselves, or to burst abruptly to the sight where they were least expected. Indeed they appeared occasionally to change their situations, and sometimes to be nearer, at others at a greater distance, as the intervening objects were more or less numerous, or nearer or less diversified.

“ There is this advantage, also, that as the valley may be said almost to run up between them, they nearly surround it, and are, therefore, more grouped together, or thrown more into perspective. Vixen

Tor, which I had always admired, even in its insulated situation, being a vast mass of rock standing on a narrow base, here shows itself with still more imposing grandeur, as it forms the principal object, where all around are striking. The fitting lights added considerably to the effect; a gleam of sunshine sometimes illuminating a rock or a cottage, that otherwise might have escaped attention.

“For about a mile and a half my eye was fixed upon this fascinating scene, though, from the intervening hedge, it seemed as if I was looking through a moving trellis. For a considerable distance the hedge is covered below with hollies, and above with the thick branches of ash and other trees; so that I am convinced a great deal of the scenery must be lost to the traveller in the summer; but then, in recompense, what he does see must be doubly gratifying, not only from its being clothed in superior beauty, but even from the abruptness with which it must occasionally burst upon him.

“There is one spot, near a deep ravine worn with the floods, which now, however, was perfectly dry, where the valley must always be seen to the greatest perfection, as there is nothing to obstruct the view, and yet enough may be found to form a foreground. Some neighbouring cottages also gave it additional animation. A little cluster of these, which I understood was called Furzetown, were most of them of a singularly grotesque form; raised amid large rocks, some of which not only served as foundations, but actually jutted out of the walls of which they formed a part. I was surprised to find so much wood immediately in the neighbourhood of the moor. One of these cottages had a kind of irregular avenue,

near which ran a little rocky stream, overhung with trees of the most fantastic shapes. One in particular drew my attention, that had apparently fallen across it, and whose lateral branches had formed themselves into young trees."

So conclude the extracts from Mr. Bray's journals, which it appeared to me desirable should be here added, in order to render complete former cursory notices of many places in our vicinity. Sincerely hoping that it may not be long ere I shall have the gratification of accompanying you to them, allow me to remain,

My dear Sir,

Ever most respectfully and faithfully yours,

ANNA E. BRAY.

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